# Parent Engagement: A Review Linking Policy and Programs

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# Overview

Since the release of the "Coleman Report" in 1966 there has been increased belief in the value of community and family partnerships with schools and a steady flow of research evidence on the benefits of parent engagement for learning outcomes (Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011). An important aspect of this work is an exploration of how parent engagement works. Evidence suggests that the activities performed by parents and schools combine in complex ways and are affected by the strength of the relationship partnership between family and school (Sheridan, Ryoo, Garbacz, Kunz, & Chumney, 2013, p. 731). Furthermore, the greater the consistency and continuity in support for learning that the child experiences between the parent and the school the greater the likelihood that student achievement will be improved (Crosnoe, 2015; Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, & Kupzyk, 2010).

The first two sections of the paper investigate the fundamental questions of "what is parent engagement" and "why does parent engagement matter". Based on the evidence to these questions the next two sections look at what parents and schools can do to promote and practice parent engagement at each developmental stage of the child's learning journey.

Beyond the impact of home and school there is the importance of program and policy responses to parent engagement requirements. Policy levers are an important way to legitimise and regulate parent engagement so that it has a positive effect on student outcomes

The final section of the paper considers the strategic connection of parent engagement within the Government's four pillars approach to education and the importance of making sure that the pillars support each other as well as their own areas of influence.

# 1. What is parent engagement?

Parent engagement has been variably defined and categorised by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers over the past forty years, with no consistent, consensus-based definition in place (Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Fox & Olsen, 2014; Gray, 2000; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). At an overarching level it can best be described as *"parents' engagement in their children's lives to influence the children's overall actions"* (Y. Kim, 2009, p. 89). However, what this looks like in practice (and thus how this can be influenced through policy and program delivery) has been subjected to continuous research and refinement that has moved away from parent involvement as exemplified in the title of the book by Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, and Davis (2007) "Beyond the Bake Sale" where the focus is what parents can do to help schools, towards a family-school partnership focused on student outcomes as a result of the shared responsibility of families and schools (E. M. Kim & Sheridan, 2015).

Parent engagement (or, as it has often been termed, 'involvement') has been closely related with learning and the three-way interaction between families, children, and their schools. However, much work in this space considers engagement in a broader sense, in which home environments and the relationships between parents and children are essential underpinnings to child learning and development outcomes (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). Importantly, parent engagement in learning does not solely equate with parent involvement at school (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014).

Reflecting this distinction, the Australian Government has adopted a holistic framework of parent engagement in learning, noting that "*parent engagement is more than being involved and informed about school activities*" and entails being "*actively involved with your child's learning, both in the home and at school*" (Australian Government Department of Education, 2015).

Within this framework ARACY is undertaking multiple streams of interrelated activities that are designed to create a shared understanding of parent engagement, build the profile of parent engagement and why it is important, develop a measurement and evaluation framework, provide evidence of what works in practice and specifically target indigenous perspectives on parent engagement. The current literature review is focused on what works in practice and how policy and contextual factors intersect with parent engagement to influence student outcomes.

A recent review by ARACY for the ACT Government sought to establish a working definition for parent engagement in learning, based on a synthesis of the research in this field and core aspects of practice (Fox & Olsen, 2014). A distinction between home-based and school-based involvement emerged, with the review identifying **family-led learning** and **family-school partnerships** as two core domains. Under each of these domains, a number of specific practices have been outlined, reflecting key elements of practice and behaviour embodied by parent engagement resulting in the following definition:

Parent engagement involves partnerships between families and schools to promote children's learning and wellbeing. It involves:

- <u>family-led learning</u> focused on high aspirations for children, shared reading, a positive environment for homework, parent-child conversation, a cognitively stimulating home environment and support for social and emotional wellbeing; and

- <u>family-school partnerships</u> that encourage positive parent-teacher relationships, communication about children's progress, and engagement in the school community, while equipping parents to effectively support and encourage their children's learning and wellbeing (Fox & Olsen, 2014).

While subject to iteration and review, this definition offers a contemporary understanding of what parent engagement in learning is and what it entails. The nature and relative value of some practices noted in this definition may evolve as children age. However, the underlying principle – that engagement works by influencing children's attitudes towards learning and their confidence as learners, with some (more direct) impact on their cognitive development and development of skills for learning – remains relevant throughout childhood and into adolescence (Emerson et al., 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

In addition to supporting learning, Harris and Goodall (2007) see parent engagement as about the degree of connectedness between the family, school and community and as school improvement through community and parent directed efforts. While the three areas are distinct they also overlap in terms of long term outcomes. Common across all the theories and frameworks is a focus on the importance of communication between parents and teachers (Albright, Weissberg, & Dusenbury, 2011 p. 2).
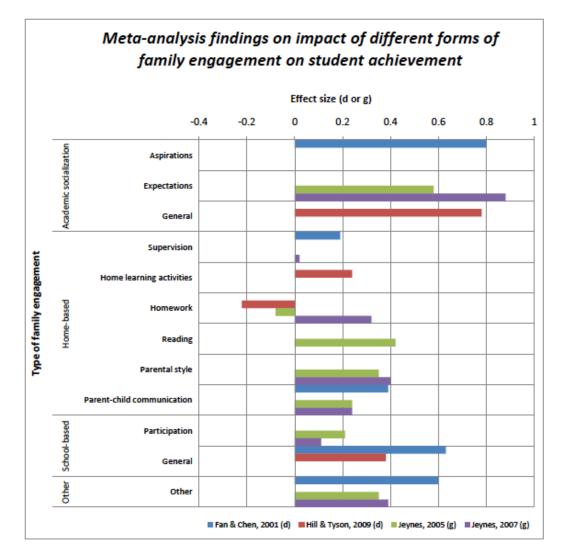
## 2. Why does parent engagement matter?

Parent engagement is important because of the potential influence and impact it can have on a child's future life outcomes. Indeed, some researchers have reported that 'non-school factors' (including levels of parent engagement) have a bigger impact on child learning outcomes than school (Bascia, Cumming, Datnow, Leithwood, & Livingstone, 2005; Emerson et al., 2012; Feinstein & Symons, 1999; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Kavanagh, 2013; Sy, 2006).

A growing body of meta-analytical research "whereby the effects in each study, where appropriate, are converted to a common measure (an effect size), such that the overall effects could be quantified, interpreted, and compared" (Hattie, 2009, p. 3) shows a **moderate to significant relationship between measures of parent involvement / engagement and child outcomes** (X. Fan & Chen, 2001; Hattie, 2009; Hill & Tyson, 2009; William H. Jeynes, 2005, 2012; Shute, Hansen, Underwood, & Razzouk, 2011). This is robust evidence that parent engagement makes a difference.

Specific positive outcomes associated with parent engagement include the following:

### 1. Parent engagement is related to student achievement across all school years

Numerous studies have identified dimensions of parent involvement and engagement leading to improved academic outcomes, including: academic performance, school attendance, school completion and lower dropout rates, graduation, and enrolment in further education and advanced courses (Catsambis, 1998; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; W.H. Jeynes, 2007; OECD, 2012; Redding, Langdon, Meyer, & Sheley, 2004; Shute et al., 2011). A systematic review of the evidence through a meta analysis of multiple independent research studies of parent engagement as shown in Figure 1, shows that the strongest effect of parent engagement on academic achievement is academic socialisation. This concept consists of a number of core aspects including aspirations and expectations for the child, linking schoolwork to current events for contextualisation of learning, providing a stimulating home learning environment and activities focused on effective learning (Emerson et al., 2012). Academic socialization is particularly important for the developmental needs in younger children and capacity building of teenagers (Wang, Hill, & Hofkens, 2014).

In a longitudinal study of 23 public schools in Maryland, USA that followed 7th graders through to 9th and 11th grade, Wang et al. (2014) found declines in both preventive communication (e.g., sharing ideas about how a child can improve) and quality of communication between parent and school from grades 7 to 11. Over the same period parents increased the provision of structure at home, providing scaffolding independence, and linking education to the future. Importantly, Parents whose children had higher achievement in later grades reported higher levels for all parental engagement activities at grade 7 (Wang, et al., 2014).

**Figure 1: Effect size of various parent engagement factors (Flamboyan Foundation, 2011)**

A recent literature review by Watkins and Howard (2015) showed that parent expectations was the strongest predictor of student achievement with 11 of the 12 studies that used expectation having significant results.. Aside from being the strongest effect, academic socialisation is also the most consistent measure of parent engagement in relation to academic achievement outcomes (Emerson et al., 2012; W. Fan & C. M. Williams, 2010; Xitao Fan, 2001; Hong & Ho, 2005; Low, 2014; Washington, 2011). This effect is shown in early childhood (Kimani, 2013), primary school (Keith & Keith, 1993), and high school (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014) where it is particularly relevant because of the focus on developing student capacity to "independently assess their goals, anticipate the results and consequences of their own actions, and learn from their successes and failures" (Emerson et al., 2012, p. 10).

The research by Hattie of over 800 studies (Hattie, 2009) is important because it synthesises the results of prior meta analyses into a common measurement framework of student achievement factors. Hattie's analysis identifies 138 effects across six domains and shows that parent engagement is 45th in rank with an effect size of .51 (effects sizes above 0.40 are considered by Hattie to be observable) that compares favourably with many teaching and student domain effects on achievement and significantly better than many school

structural effects such as school sector attended or single versus multiple grade/age class rooms that are below 0.40 in magnitude.

## 2. Parent engagement is also associated with improved behavioural, social and emotional outcomes

Studies show a link between levels of parent engagement in learning and child behavioural, social and emotional outcomes. Positive effects have been reported on student attitudes and behaviour in school, ability to adapt and transition to school, social skills, self-esteem and sense of personal competence, and mental wellbeing (Catsambis, 1998; Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Shute et al., 2011; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014)[1].

As part of a theory of change in understanding how parent engagement is activated research has shown that the act of parents discussing school-related topics with their children convey the importance of education and schooling. The frequency and quality of the discussion leads to improvements in the child's attitudes and behaviours to school because the importance of education is conveyed through parent modelling of child behaviour (McNeal, 2014).

A study by Wang et al. (2014) showed that increased preventive communication (e.g., sharing ideas about how a child can improve), providing structure at home, and linking education to future success by parents was associated with a 29% decrease in problem behaviour exhibited by students . A 1 standard deviation unit increase in preventive communication, providing structure at home, and linking education to future success was associated with a decrease of 0.06, 0.13, and 0.13 of a standard deviation unit in adolescent problem behaviour, respectively. While relatively small in magnitude these changes were significant. Furthermore, parental warmth altered the relation between home structure and problem behaviours. The higher the level of parental warmth, together with increased structure at home was associated with less problem behaviour. Conversely, the lower the level of parental warmth coupled with increased structure at home was associated with more behaviour problems. These effects persisted across socio-economic status (SES) and ethnicity.

Good emotional attachment to school is an important outcome for students that is influenced through parent engagement (Batchelor, 2013). Emotional attachment to school leads to increased motivation, self-regulation of behaviour, acceptance of authority, task persistence, active engagement and pro-social attitudes and behaviours (Batchelor, 2013).

A longitudinal analysis of grades 1, 3 and 5 using by El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Childcare and Youth Development, showed that increases in a measure of parent

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[1] Catsambis actually finds a negative relationship between school communication and achievement . Catsambis suggests that this negative finding is because parents whose children have academic or behavioral problems tend to seek the help of school personnel and increase their contacts with school.

engagement reflecting teachers' and parents' reports of parental encouragement of education (e.g., "How often does this parent volunteer or visit at school?"), parental investment (e.g., "How important is education in this family?"), and educational attitudes (e.g., "How much do you feel this parent has the same goals for his or her child that the school does?") predicted a reduction in problem behaviours and improved social skills. Specifically, higher average levels of teacher-reported parent engagement were associated with better social functioning.

Emotional attachment to school may be particularly difficult for children with a CALD background. Research by Niehaus and Adelson (2014) on 1020 grade 3 English language learning students across 420 schools demonstrated that higher levels of school support predicted more parental engagement, which, in turn, predicted fewer social-emotional problems. Lower social-emotional problems were linked to higher levels of academic achievement. The study also showed that increasing support services to CALD students resulted in lower levels of academic achievement and more social-emotional problems which suggests these children may see the need for support as vindicating their lack of achievement or behaviour (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

### 3. Parent engagement can mitigate structural disadvantage and lack of resources

Research shows that parent engagement in learning can mitigate the influence of structural factors such as SES and race. That is, students with engaged parents – *no matter what their income or background*– are more likely to do well at school, graduate from school and go on to higher education (Fox et al., 2015; Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, & Lim, 2014; OECD, 2012; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

The study by Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) is of importance for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a longitudinal study of over 1,000 subjects. Secondly, it looks at mental health as well as academic achievement. Thirdly it sees SES and ethnicity as changing the nature of the relationship between parent engagement and student outcomes. Finally, it also looks at parent involvement indirectly affecting student outcomes through its influence on school engagement. The model is shown in Figure 2 below.
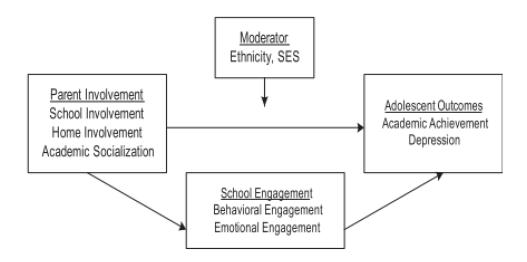
**Figure 2: Conceptual model of parent engagement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014)**

In testing the conceptual model in Figure 2, Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) found that the effects of parental engagement on student achievement and depression varied by the type of parent engagement involved (school involvement, home involvement or academic socialisation). Academic socialisation was the only type of parent engagement that improved both student achievement and emotional well-being. Of particular importance was the finding that parent engagement predicted academic achievement and emotional well-being **both directly and indirectly** through its effect on behavioural and emotional engagement. Finally, SES altered the effect of parent engagement on adolescent outcomes such that higher SES families had better parent engagement and higher student outcomes than low SES families. Ethnicity did not alter the effect of parent engagement on adolescent outcomes.

### 4. There may be longer-term economic and social benefits as a result of increasing parent engagement

A longitudinal investigation of over 17,000 mothers involved in the United Kingdom's National Child Development Study found that parent engagement (measured by parental interest in child's education and the parent-child relationship) during childhood and adolescence was associated with longer-term outcomes in adulthood, including (lower) benefit recipiency and the need for social housing (Hango, 2005). There is also good evidence demonstrating a link between parent engagement and children going on to attend university (and thus future employment and income) (Gemici et al., 2014).

One of the few studies to estimate the economic value of parent engagement found that parent effort measured by "how frequently parents (1) discuss activities or events of particular interest to the child, (2) discuss things the child studied in class, (3) discuss selecting courses or programs at school, (4) attend a school meeting, and (5) volunteer at the child's school", had a larger effect on student achievement than school resources – being equivalent to $1,000 per-pupil spending per annum (Houtenville & Conway, 2008, p. 441). The authors also contend that the first two measures are more important than the last three as they reflect the parent-child relationship rather than the parent-school relationship.

Parent engagement studies have predominantly viewed the parent as being a static form of influence on student outcomes rather than as a dynamic agent of behaviour change (Wang et al., 2014). Wang et al. (2014) suggest that parent engagement rather than being static, continuously develops and evolves in the context of the parent–student relationship and that the degree of support and warmth that is contained in the relationship has a significant impact on the effectiveness of parent engagement especially when the student transitions from primary to high school.

In support of Wang et al. (2014), research shows that **parent engagement continues to matter throughout childhood and into adolescence** (Avvisati, Besbas, & Guyon, 2010; Baker & Soden, 1997; Bandalos & Raczynski, 2015; Nurmi & Silinskas, 2014; Park & Holloway, 2013; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Shute et al., 2011; Stelmack, n.d.; Terzian & Mbwana, 2009; Washington, 2011; Wollscheid, 2013; You & Nguyen, 2011). Justifiably, a focus of much research, policy and programmatic intervention has been on parents engaging with their children during the early years, given the neuroscience regarding brain development and the concept of parents as first teachers (Fox et al., 2015). However, research supports the assertion that parent engagement in learning matters throughout all levels of school, even though the nature of how it transpires in practice may alter. Parent engagement can be just as important for older youth as it is for younger children (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b).

## 3   What are the key things parents can do?

A growing body of literature outlines the kinds of parent engagement activities which matter most in shaping child learning and developmental outcomes. The nature and quality of this literature is inevitably varied, as is its specificity and transferability from theory to practice. Positively though, there has been a general coalescence around the kinds of things parents can do which matter.  This is increasingly supported by robust analytical assessment of the relationship between types of parent engagement behaviour and child outcomes (e.g. see Catsambis (1998); X. Fan and Chen (2001); Hill and Tyson (2009); W.H. Jeynes (2007); William H. Jeynes (2012); OECD (2012); Shute et al. (2011); Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014)). A synthesis of this research broadly suggests there are **six key areas for parent engagement**, outlined as follows:

**Table 1: Key areas for parent engagement**

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|---|---|
| **Aspirations & expectations** | Consistently identified as the most influential aspect of parent engagement, parent's expectations shape children's own beliefs about their potential, sense of academic competence, the value they place on learning, and aspirations to complete school and continue into further education. |
| **Cognitively stimulating and supportive home environment** | A cognitively stimulating home environment is associated with positive learning outcomes, demonstrating that value is placed on education and supporting families to engage in learning activities in the home (e.g. reading, homework, cultural activities, learning-related discussions etc). |
| **Parent-child interaction** | Family conversations can have a strong influence on children's cognitive skills, the value they place on learning and enjoyment of learning. This includes conversations around school and learning directly, but also family discussions about news, political and social issues, books, TV and movies, and family storytelling. |
| **Age-appropriate engagement in learning activity** | Parent engagement in learning activities – e.g. homework, shared-reading, extra-curricular activities – is important to support the development of a child's cognitive skills, self-confidence and ability to learn independently. Importantly though it should be sensitive to the child's developmental stage, in particular increased desire for autonomy and self-management as children age. |
| **Supporting social, emotional and physical wellbeing** | A child's general wellbeing is an important contributor to their learning experience, reflecting an ecological model of child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Child-teacher and peer relationships play a crucial role in their enjoyment of learning and engagement with school, while age-appropriate support in nutrition, sleep, and exercise have an underlying influence on developmental, behavioural, and learning outcomes. |
| **Family-school partnerships** | Evidence suggests that positive and trusting parent-teacher relationships are important so that communication can be shared around a child's progress, learning goals, objectives etc, as well as provision of advice and specific learning strategies that parents can engage in with their children at home. While the case for parent involvement in school activities and events is less compelling, it has been posited that this allows parents to demonstrate the value they place on education and assists the establishment and maintenance of connections with school staff to support their child's learning activities. |

A noticeable finding from this work is the **relative weight and influence of parent engagement practices which are family-led or home-based**, as opposed to those activities entailing parent involvement with the school. While this could infer that schools have limited influence over parent engagement behaviours and impacts, many researchers have reported that they remain critical in promoting, encouraging and actively supporting parents to foster an atmosphere and environment for learning at home (Department of Education and Training, 2006; Emerson et al., 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Sanders et al., 1999). It should also be considered that the benefits of parent

engagement increase when there is continuity and consistency across the home and school environments (Crosnoe, 2015).

Another salient finding within much of the literature is the premise that it is not always essential for parents to be directly involved with their children in completing specific academic activities and tasks (e.g. homework), especially as they age and content becomes more complex. Instead, the research evidence frequently indicates that most value comes from parents fostering a general atmosphere of learning and a supportive, motivating environment for children to undertake learning activities. For instance, communicating educational expectations, demonstrating (directly or indirectly) the value of learning, linking school work to current news and events, and providing a supportive and stimulating home environment (Emerson et al., 2012; Hill & Tyson, 2009). In essence, **parents as influencers rather than actors or directors of child learning** (Gemici et al., 2014).

## 3.1 Practical steps

From a practical perspective there are a lot of things that parents can do. Importantly, for the activity to be effective it has to be age-appropriate and so activities that work for one age group may not work for another or worse, could in fact be counter productive. From the research reviewed it is evident that parent engagement within the context of the home setting typically has greater impact on child outcomes than parent involvement and engagement with schools. It might be assumed, then, that schools can only have limited influence on the aspects of parent engagement which really matter. However, countering this assumption many researchers have reported that schools can promote, encourage and build parents' skills, knowledge and capacity to enable them to foster an atmosphere and environment for learning at home (Catsambis, 1998; Department of Education and Training, 2006; Emerson et al., 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

Indeed, research shows that school practices which assist parents to establish home environments that support children as students as well as facilitating interactions between parents and adolescents on learning activities in the home are related to increased parent engagement at home. Consequently this research concludes that schools which develop strong, comprehensive programs of partnership with parents are likely to improve parent attitudes toward the school and enable more families to become involved in their teens' education **both at school <u>and</u> at home** (Sanders et al., 1999).

The practicalities of exactly how schools can promote and support parent engagement have been subject to substantial discussion in the literature. On the whole, much of this work takes the form of 'best practice' guidelines and recommendations. While these tend to be informed by logical reasoning and assumptions based on parent motivations, influential aspects of engagement, school practices, education systems etc, they are rarely validated by a strong level of empirical evidence.[2]

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2 Example texts of this nature include work by Bull et al. (2008), Department of Education and Training (2006), Education Review Office (2008), Educational Transformations (2007), Ferguson et al. (2008), Harris and Goodall

Given this, it has proved somewhat problematic to establish a definitive set of guidelines for 'what works' for schools in engaging parents in their children's learning. Moreover, the literature suggests there is no 'one size fits all' approach for best practice in this space, with schools ideally developing and implementing engagement policies and practices that are responsive and adaptive to the needs of the school community (Educational Transformations, 2007; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Kendall, Straw, Jones, Springate, & Grayson, 2008). Therefore it is perhaps best to consider what schools can do in terms of the following three guiding principles based on the motivations and ability for parents to engage, as well as drawing on practices that have emerged and garnered broad consensus at to their effectiveness.

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| **Acknowledgement that parents value education** | Identify the ways in which parents promote their children's education, and affirm parents for their dedication to their children's schooling" (Power, 2015, p. 105). Essentially, this is about getting to know families and how they navigate education. This is partly a contextual problem where teachers need to expand their contextual view of parents beyond the school gate. |
| **Treat school as a family** | One of the best ways schools can help parents is to understand and build upon the help-seeking behaviour of families as evidenced in the healthcare sphere (Cavaleri et al., 2010). A way to do this is to use learning collaboratives focused on continuous quality improvement. Learning collaboratives assist with the building of the school–community relationship and shaping the school's response to the needs of parents. The challenge is to get teaching staff engaged. One way to accomplish this engagement so as to promote the diffusion of ideas generated from learning collaboratives throughout schools is identify and recruit teachers who are key opinion leaders in the school (Power, 2015). An important aspect of the learning collaborative approach is that low income families often avoid formal systems and gravitate towards informal networks (e.g., faith-based organizations, neighbourhood clubs, recreation centres) for information and support. Schools then need to leverage their potential to influence these parents through the learning collaborative by positioning the school as a community-based resource rather than just a place where children are educated (Power, 2015) |
| **Integrate outreach activities at both family and community levels** | Integration allows schools to better understand and respond to the contextual factors that may impact upon engagement practices. For example, schools could consider the value of strengths-based home visits. These should be about getting to know the child and the family and not about problem solving or issue identification. Such visits show that the school cares about individual families and wants to know how best to help the family succeed (Lendrum, Barlow, & Humphrey, 2015; Magouirk, 2015; Poza, Brooks, & Valdes, 2014; Willis, 2013) |

(2007), Harvard Family Research Project (2007a), Harvard Family Research Project (2007b), Henderson and Mapp (2002), & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2004).

## 3.2 Appreciating and understanding why parents become involved

Before considering the practices schools could adopt within the principles, there is value in taking a step back and thinking about the motivations (and thus also the barriers) for parents to become engaged with their children in learning. By appreciating and understanding why parents become involved, schools can begin to structure the approaches and programs that are more likely to touch a chord with parents and intrinsically influence their motivation to become engaged or more engaged than they are at present. As "parental engagement" includes both school and non-school activities, evidence sourced from only one location will likely provide an incomplete and inaccurate picture. A further complication is that evidence for parent engagement activities is not the same thing as evidence for the impact of activity (Flessa, 2014) or the reasons for the presence of the activity.

The work of Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues on parent engagement conceptual model development and validation suggests that there are four main drivers of parent engagement:

1. Parents' role construction – the belief that they are important and necessary to their child's education;

2. Parents' self efficacy – their sense of personal confidence to engage with their child and the belief that this will make a difference;

3. Perceptions of invitations to be involved – the belief that their involvement is welcome and valued by both the child and the school, manifest through both general and specific opportunities to engage; and

4. Parents' life context – the time, energy, resources and skills parents have to become involved and engaged (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

There are various elements within these four areas that schools can influence – some more strongly and overtly than others (and the authors of this work argue as such, outlining a series of strategies for schools (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 120). For instance, helping to build parents' knowledge and skills around learning processes, communication that conveys a sense of welcome and explicitly invites parents to engage, an approach treating parents as partners in the child's education, and recognition of parents' circumstances and the strategies which can help to overcome barriers related to time, energy and resources.

Such approaches are often recurrent throughout other parent engagement literature, offering something tangible for schools to adopt which are grounded in the underlying psychology behind why it is parents become engaged in their children's learning. The following section looks at this  in more detail, highlighting the more commonly supported and recognised principles and practices for schools to consider implementing.

## 3.3 Practical steps and measures for schools

This section offers a synthesis of the main principles and practices that schools could adopt Broadly speaking, there are four main streams of school activity which consistently emerge from the literature as promoting and supporting parent engagement:

1. Fostering a supportive culture and climate for parent engagement within school;

2. Strengthening parent-teacher relationships and opportunities for interaction;

3. Employing effective and meaningful communication strategies with parents; and

4. Creating opportunities and invitations for parents to engage in learning with their children at school and at home. The more specific and targeted towards individual parents the better the level of parent engagement as a result of the invitation (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

While the streams are distinct, each stream does not operate or manifest in isolation. Certain aspects (e.g. a supportive school culture) may provide the pre-conditions for engagement, which only becomes realised with the implementation of specific activities, relationships, and invitations to participate. Effective communication strategies may facilitate improved parent-teacher relationships and vice versa. Opportunities for parents to engage in learning may only be grasped when other factors are in place. They are therefore both interdependent and interrelated.

Additionally, while the principles behind each of these four streams are relevant across school years and settings, their implementation is subject to variability as children and parents progress along the education system. For instance, while the value of the relationship remains somewhat constant, approaches to developing parent-teacher relationships may differ substantially in the secondary school system compared to those in the primary and pre-school systems. Some of these key changes are identified at the end of this section.

## 1) Foster a supportive culture and climate for parent engagement within the school

- **Development and implementation of a whole-of-school policy for parent engagement**. Such a policy should be developed with parents as active partners (rather than as a 'top down' imposition), with implementation requiring time and long-term commitment (at least three years has been suggested). One example of such an approach which led to improvements in academic outcomes was the Solid Foundations Schools initiative in the US (Bull et al., 2008; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Redding et al., 2004). Another example is reported in a series of case studies in Switzerland (Straumann & Egger, 2011) where school principals with written formal requirements reported strong parent engagement activity.  Policies can also directly focus on school leadership and there is evidence that providing explicit written policy concerning family involvement that clearly describes the role of the principal leads to better parent engagement

(Ferguson et al., 2008). Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon (2002) see the written policy as one of eight essential ingredients to successful engagement. The policy should be written and formal and emphasise the partnership and relationship between the family and school rather than specific activities which should be undertaken (Sheridan & Kim, 2015).

- **Engender a sense of welcome to parents to be involved in the school and engage in learning activities**. Practical mechanisms might include an open door / drop in policy, invitations for parents into school and classrooms, clear contact points and pathways, putting on community events unrelated to learning, and regular communication between home and school advocating and placing value on parent involvement (Department of Education and Training, 2006; Educational Transformations, 2007; Ferguson et al., 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Such approaches have been observed in certain extended service / community school models and within Indigenous communities and reported to increase the sense of welcome parents feel (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Muller, 2012). The sense of welcome is particularly important for culturally diverse families where engagement is more dependent on being accepted (Poza et al., 2014). If the school is seen as not welcoming then these parents get engaged through non-school pathways (Poza et al., 2014). Low income parents also see schools as less welcoming and respond better to trust building efforts by the school rather than access to resources (McClure, 2011).

- **School leadership committed to parent engagement and supportive of staff efforts**. This is frequently cited as crucial (Department of Education and Training, 2006; Education Review Office, 2008; Educational Transformations, 2007). Some research suggests that leadership styles which are more attuned to the 'politics' of the environment outside the school provoke greater perceived empowerment amongst parents (Griffith, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

It should be noted that much of the evidence for whole-school effects is typically ex post facto, where the characteristics of successful schools are examined as opposed to validating the value added to learning by experimental interventions (Redding et al., 2004).

## 2) Strengthen parent-teacher relationships and opportunities for interaction

- **Develop relationships based on relational trust and recognition**. A school with high levels of relational trust tends to be composed of teachers and parents who place high value on being members of the school community, are willing to work together to attain student improvement, and are cognisant of the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. They share common norms about how individuals should behave and identify with and take pride in the school (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). Relational trust flows from building the social capital of parents so that they have the confidence to become a partner in the goal of student achievement. The relationship being viewed as a partnership is especially important. Parent engagement is not the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the parent but an equitable redistribution that alters the relationship between all three actors (parent, child and teacher) so that it becomes a non-judgemental, supportive relationship in order for effective parent engagement to occur (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013).

- **Interactions between parents and teachers**. Interactions that are more frequent and positive in tone and content, focusing on linking parent engagement with learning objectives and engaging in joint problem-solving are more likely to be beneficial (Emerson et al., 2012; Leithwood, 2010). Family-school partnership programs (e.g. Families and School Together (FAST)) and workshops for parents (e.g. 'Parent Universities') have shown some positive results in terms of enhanced parent-teacher relationships and mutual recognition of roles (Caspe & Lopez, 2006; Coote, 2000; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). For example, "Fast Track, a program intervention for young children at high risk for long-term antisocial behavior, and SAFE Children, a community and school-based program for 5- and 6-year-olds living in poverty, both found that while control group participants tended to show declining family involvement scores over time, intervention group parents maintained a stable or slightly increasing score" (Caspe & Lopez, 2006, p. 6). The Incredible Years program trains teachers to increase their capacity to work with children and families. "Training increased teachers' bonding with parents and that parent involvement in school was higher in classrooms where the teacher participated in the teacher training" (Caspe & Lopez, 2006, p. 11).

- **Ensure there are clear opportunities for parent-teacher interaction**. While this should include formal structures such as parent-child-teacher evenings, informal and ad-hoc opportunities for interaction need to be readily available (e.g. teachers being available at school drop-off / pick-up, 'open-door' policies) (Education Review Office, 2008; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004).

- **Consider professional development for teachers**. This will help them better understand the role of parents in children's learning and develop specific skills and knowledge in engaging with families. Studies suggest in-service professional development (e.g. teachers within a school collaborating and sharing experiences, suggestions, and developing and reviewing approaches) has a positive impact on teacher beliefs and confidence in engaging with families (Flanigan, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002; Warren, Noftle, Ganley, & Quintanar, 2011). For example, the Warren et al. (2011) results on the impact of a teacher family involvement graduate course show a significant increase in teachers in three global areas compared to original self-assessed baseline levels: (a) their professional knowledge and skills, (b) their professional dispositions, and (c) their authentic relationships with students, their families, and the community.

- **Undertake liaison and outreach to both parents and community stakeholders.** Engaging people who can assist with parent engagement activities at key junctures and for key (disengaged) audiences is a critical factor. For example, programs in which teachers engage with parents of children through home visting report an improvement in relationships and connections between the parties involved (Cowan, Bobby, St. Roseman, & Echandia, 2002; Goff Pejsa & Associates LLC, 2014). Outreach has also been posited as a useful means to build relationships with some disengaged parents in particular communities, including culturally diverse parents, refugees, Indigenous parents and low-income families (Day, Williams, & Fox, 2009; Huat See & Gorard, 2013).

- **Universal delivery**. Have an overarching policy of universal delivery so that parents do not feel targeted even when they are.

## 3) Employ effective and meaningful communication strategies with parents

- **Broad principles for effective communication**.  Communication with parents should ideally include: opportunities for two-way communication initiated and directed by both parents and school staff; multiple communication channels for information provision (i.e. do not assume communication sent home with students will reach the parent); availability of face-to-face contact where necessary or desired; communication that is regular, timely and sustained to maintain connection and contribute to parents' perception of feeling valued; and communication with clear aims and purpose (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; Education Review Office, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Harris & Goodall, 2007)

- **Communication development**.  School professionals who continue to attempt to contact parents to develop positive communication are usually successful in obtaining resources needed to optimize their student's learning environment (Abadeh, 2014). Sensitivity around the language, tone and nature of communications with parents are some of the key ingredients of success. Commonly cited pitfalls include formal and dictatorial tone of language, communications that appears one-directional and is overly focused on communicating problems or issues (rather than positive news), absence of a named contact person, and administrators acting overzealously as gatekeepers (Abadeh, 2014; Davies, Ryan, & Tarr, 2011; W. Fan & C.M. Williams, 2010). Where necessary, interpreting or translation services should be utilised to ensure maximum inclusion of the whole school community. School bureaucracies in high school do tend to act as a barrier to positive communication between home and school (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015)

- **Strategic communication approach**. Various strategies and interventions can be implemented which may increase and enhance communication between schools and parents include: parent-teacher meetings that engage parents in conversations as active partners; clearly defined and embedded home-school liaison roles, particularly for interacting with 'high needs' and / or culturally diverse families; dedicated teacher outreach (e.g. phone calls / emails direct to parents); use of ICT to complement other communication channels and strategies; and implementation of interactive homework (e.g. TIPS), which includes feedback mechanisms between teachers and parents (Bennett-Conroy, 2012; Educational Transformations, 2007; Emerson et al., 2012; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lewin & Luckin, 2010). The New Zealand Phone Home Program was designed to facilitate two-way communication between the home and school. This was achieved by providing video capable mobile phones to all teaching and key support staff (the office manager, the international student co-ordinator and the caretaker) to make immediate contact with family and share "good news" stories about student learning and behaviour. Disruptive behaviour

is also reported to family immediately in a solution-focused way (Bull et al., 2008).

## 4) Create opportunities and invitations for parents to engage in learning with their children at school and at home

- **Have a range of options for parents**. Provide opportunities and invitations for parents to be involved in school activities and events. Examples include volunteering positions, parent-teacher meetings, school orientation / open days, career expos, family days, access to extended support services and advice, and provision / hosting of wider family support / parenting programs (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sanders et al., 1999).

- **Proactive approach**. Develop proactive strategies to minimise barriers to parent engagement in school events and activities, i.e. provision of childcare, transportation, flexible (post-work) scheduling, culturally sensitive approaches and conduits (Harris & Goodall, 2007; Huat See & Gorard, 2013). It is important not to underestimate the logistical barriers faced by parents. However, examples of successful responses in which schools shape their engagement policy to suit the complex needs and patterns of parents' lives do exist that encourage 'hard to reach' parents to become engaged such as with the use of SMS messaging or translations of important documents into languages other than English (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011).

- **Be specific**. Provide specific invitations for parents to engage in their child's learning at home. Most commonly this is done through interactive homework resources (e.g. TIPS). Ideally these should be delivered at regular intervals during the school year, be connected to the school curriculum while allowing flexibility to families' own situations (e.g. using games, photo activities), help parents become knowledgeable of the learning process rather than the content per se, and provide opportunities for parents to feed back and discuss exercises with teachers (Bennett-Conroy, 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Huat See & Gorard, 2013; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004).

- **Use transition points**. Leverage opportunities to engage parents in key transitionary points and development stages – i.e. entrance to primary school, transition to secondary school, course planning and career options in adolescence etc (Emerson et al., 2012; Harackiewicz, 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b).

- **Parents want to improve**. Seek to offer and host programs and activities which can build parent knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage in their child's learning. These could include:

- programs and workshops which aim to improve parent's capacity to support their child's learning in developmentally-appropriate ways (e.g. shared reading, family literacy and numeracy programs);

- invitations into the classroom to observe teaching strategies; parent networking opportunities to share strategies and tips;

- home visiting by teachers to share and model engagement approaches; and provision of written advice and guidance (Caspe & Lopez, 2006; Department of Education and Training, 2006; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007a, 2007b).

Schools should be viewed as community hubs and access should not be restricted to school hours. School facilities should be available on a cost recovery basis.

A summary of the above approaches is in the following table.

**Table 2: Proposed approaches to parent engagement in schools**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Culture and climate** | Written policies in partnership with parents that emphasise the shared responsibility for child outcomes. |
| | Warm and welcoming approach to parents. Use translation, non-learning activities. Foster mutual trust. Focus on relationship building rather than resource allocation. |
| | Leadership commitment to parent engagement. |
| **Parent-teacher interaction** | Minimise displays of power and control over learning processes. |
| | Solution orientation rather than problem-child focus. |
| | Ongoing professional development in communication skills. |
| **Communication strategies** | Use multiple channels to communicate not just notes via the student to the parent. |
| | Use parent language approach. |
| | Translation services for non English speaking families |
| | Balance good and bad news and use positive communication style. |
| **Engage with learning invitations** | Proactive approach to minimise barriers. |
| | Be specific when inviting parents – value them as individuals. |
| | Help build parent confidence to help by using workshops and classroom observation days |

## 3.4  Secondary years and beyond

The **transition from primary to secondary school represents a significant shift** for both students and parents. For parents, this change is considered to act as a potential impediment to continuing their engagement, with some losing confidence and sense of self-efficacy to be involved (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). High schools can be large and complex, making it difficult for parents to figure out how to become involved; teachers specialise in one subject and instruct a large number of students, making it difficult for them to develop relationships with every parent; likewise, the increase in number of teachers a student sees challenges parent's knowledge and efficacy of who to contact; additionally, the increase in number of subjects and curricular choices can be complex for parents to fully grasp (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Corresponding to this environmental and relational change, **developmental changes as children move into adolescence and early adulthood** alter the nature and type of parent engagement likely to be effective. This in turn has implications for the way schools attempt to promote and support engagement activity. With greater student autonomy and desire for independence, parents appear to take a less active (or, at least, less overt) role, and several sources report a drop in parent engagement during high school (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Sanders et al., 1999).

**Some potential implications for schools:**

- Significant efforts appear warranted during the transitionary and orientation stage to familiarise parents with school environments, teaching staff, communication channels, conduits and processes. This may need to be repeated at the start of each school year as teaching personnel and communication channels change.

- Reduce approaches which seek to engage parents directly in subject content and supervision of student's homework. Interactive homework activities can remain appropriate but should aim to help parents become knowledgeable of cognitive processes and environmental factors that support adolescent learning and productive homework completion.

- Leverage opportunities to engage parents in discussions and processes related to further education, course planning, and careers – an area in which parents express spontaneous interest in during the high school years (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007b).

- Additionally, opportunities may exist to engage parents in adolescent health and wellbeing to support them through this developmental stage. For example, sessions provided by school on adolescent nutrition, risk behaviours, stress management etc.

- Parents need to move from supervision to influence and to help students stay focused and oraganised around school work and extracurricular activities. Friendship development and peer support are often overlooked by parents in this age group but helping students avoid risk behaviours or to manage peer pressure is important.

# 4  Program and policy responses

Schools have a definite role in program development and implementation. To do this role effectively there has to be an acknowledgement of the resource allocation problems involved in policy (Ferguson et al., 2008; Fitzgerald, 2014; Hattie, 2015).

Crucially, promoting and supporting parent engagement should not be seen solely as the domain and responsibility of schools. While schools are obviously key cogs and conduits in this process, other programmatic and policy components could help to support and facilitate schools to boost engagement and/or enhance levels of engagement in their own right such as welfare agencies, health agencies and local government agencies. Thus policy makers, program deliverers, service providers, communities, evaluators, and funders all have potential roles to play from a community engagement perspective.

Specific types of program and intervention pathways (some of which will involve schools, others which may not) have evolved which seek to – in some way or other – heighten parent engagement. These include programs in: early childhood parenting skills, shared literacy and numeracy, school readiness and transition, family strengthening and functioning, and school drop-out. While broad and varied, the nature and impact of such programs – along with the elements that seem more likely to drive their efficacy – are summarised in this section.

Beyond this program response, we go on to consider some of the key policy options for parent engagement, and outline how certain policy levers could be adopted in an attempt to promote and support parents to engage in their children's learning.

One important consideration with program delivery is who should deliver the program. There is good evidence around schools as the delivery mechanism for parent education programs in the USA. For example, in a study that specifically targeted Latino families in elementary schools in California shows that after participating in the parent education program, almost 400 Latino parents substantially altered their attitudes and behaviours toward parent engagement (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2005). The findings indicate that culturally sensitive parent education programs may be a promising way to promote CALD parent engagement in Australia.

Another critical issue is equipping schools with the ability to adequately meet the needs of children and families beyond the normal expertise and capacity of schools such as families with complex needs. Programs that foster self regulation, resilience and capability have been successful in assisting the most disadvantaged children and families, to overcome adversity by improving social and emotional wellbeing. This is important as the consensus across criminology, education, medicine, psychology, public health, social work and sociology, is that no single pathway leads to poor outcomes such as school failure, drug use, delinquency, self harm, suicide, and violence towards others. It is the accumulation of multiple risk factors that disrupts normal developmental trajectories (Jenson & Fraser, 2011, p. 8).

For example, school-based mental health promotion initiatives such as social and emotional learning programs (SELP) improve students' social skills, emotional wellbeing, and academic outcomes. A meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal SELP involving 270 thousand students (K-12) showed that in comparison to controls, SELP participants had improvement in social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance that translated into an 11 per cent gain in achievement (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Further interventions to improve social and emotional wellbeing may include:

- Implementation of evidence-based whole-of-school interventions to promote resilience in every school.

- Expansion of initiatives to target bullying, and mentoring programs for vulnerable children and young people to build resilience and capacity.

- Expansion of parental support programs tailored to particular skills and capabilities at key life stages and transition points and targeted for families under stress such as those living with mental health or drug issues, financial pressures or family violence.

- Whole of community strategies and education to promote strong mental health outcomes, de-stigmatise mental illness and to support proactive help seeking behaviours for early intervention (ARACY, 2014, p. 89).

## 4.1  Intervention approaches and pathways

### 1) Early childhood parenting skills

Parenting programs which aim to build parenting skills during the early years and foster attachment between parents and their children are fairly commonplace and many are reported to yield positive child developmental outcomes (Fox et al., 2015; Wade, Macvean, Falkiner, Devine, & Mildon, 2012). The role of learning within these many not always be explicit, but they are considered to support the establishment of suitable preconditions for learning. In addition, many programs lead to positive learning outcomes through parents engaging in practices such as counting and play, interaction with their child, and developing parent's confidence, skills, efficacy and social capital. The practices and relationships addressed in such programs thus influence how well children do in school (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007a).

**Common elements of effective programs** have been identified in a recent review of the best evidenced parenting programs conducted by the Parenting Research Centre (Macvean et al., 2013). These comprised:

- Delivery by a suitably qualified and trained professional, using a structured curriculum and planned sessions, often with the use of a manual.

- An initial assessment of the family, parent and child to identify needs, concerns, skills, current functioning, resources and supports. An individualised plan is then developed for each family.

- Delivery which is undertaken by discussing material with the family, rather than by didactic teaching.

- Multifaceted content and themes, taking a holistic approach to child development and family functioning. Common areas covered in effective programs include:

  o Information about child behaviour and parent responses and strategies to manage and increase desired behaviour;

  o Provision of an environment where children know what to expect and what is expected of them (routines, rules, limits, instructions etc);

  o The use of positive parenting strategies (e.g. praise, reward charts);

  o The use of non-punitive measures for decreasing misbehaviour (e.g. time out, quiet time, planned ignoring);

  o Information about parent-child interactions and examination of current interactions and responses to each other;

  o Provision of strategies to help parents and children regulate their emotions;

  o Information about child health, development and safety within the home environment; and

  o Information and support for parent and family wellbeing, such as caring for physical and mental health, access to services, education and employment, future planning etc.

**Sample programs and interventions[3]** supported by evidence of effectiveness:

Nurse-Family Partnerships, Triple P Parenting, Incredible Years, Parent Effective Training (PET), Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Parent Corps

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[3] A more comprehensive listing of programs covered by the five areas is in the Appendix.

## 2) Literacy and numeracy programs

The evidence base for the efficacy of literacy (and to a lesser extent, numeracy) interventions which involve parents engaging in activities with their children is relatively strong (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Nye, Turner, & Schwartz, 2006; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Most of these types of intervention take place during early childhood prior to schooling, although some family literacy programs in which activities are undertaken by parents and their children in a school setting show some value on both child and parent outcomes (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, 2007).

**Common elements of effective literacy programs** cited in evaluation studies and related literature involve:

- Interactive shared reading approaches in which parents are trained and supported in the skills to help their children read, rather than just employing passive 'listening' approaches;

- Providing parents with written information and guidance containing specific tips and prompts they can use during shared reading activities;

- Approaches which are culturally sensitive and recognise literacy as social practice, informed by everyday activities such as telling stories, play, singing, trips to supermarkets etc; and

- With specific reference to family literacy programs, approaches that are developed in partnership with those they serve, recognise and utilise parent strengths (rather than being deficit-based), understand and respect the cultural, social and economic contexts of families, and form part of a flexible program which serves multiple purposes for children and their families.

  (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Mol, 2008; Moran, Ghate, & van der Merwe, 2004; Sénéchal & Young, 2008; Spedding et al., 2007)

**Sample programs and interventions** supported by evidence of effectiveness:

Reach Out and Read (ROR), Parents as Teachers (PAT), Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language & Literacy (SHELLS), Even Start Family Literacy Program, Dialogic Reading Intervention (Crain-Thoreson, 1999)

## 3) School 'readiness' and transition to school

Approaches to facilitate effective transition to school have been considered important not only for child 'school readiness', but also the confidence and efficacy of parents to build relationships with schools and continue to engage in their child's learning as they move through the education system (Dockett et al., 2011; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007a). While a few studies have reported how transition to school interventions have fostered more positive child learning outcomes through the involvement of parents, the quality of evaluation evidence in this space is somewhat limited (Huat See & Gorard, 2013; Southwell & Heaton, 2013). However, there is a broad consensus that interventions which adopt a relational approach and foster partnerships between children, families, prior to school and primary school personnel are more desirable for effective school readiness and transition (Jackson & Woodrow, 2008; Sorin & Markotsis, 2008).

**Common elements of effective interventions** that have been established through a recent review of school transition approaches (Southwell & Heaton, 2013) involve:

- Multiple and varied activities over long periods of time (as opposed to orientation programs), which engage children, parents, teachers and other service providers and community.

- Relationships and connections for children and families before and during changes in settings, and continuity of learning and transfer of information, skills and knowledge when moving from one environment to another;

- Strengths-based approaches that allow schools to build on what children have learned prior to school entry, identifying learning needs and styles before school;

- Linkages in systems and practical tools which facilitate connections and conversations between professionals and between families and professionals (e.g. transition statements and meetings, systemic mechanisms and 'conversation starters'); and

- Parent and community familiarity with and engagement in learning environments, including learning at home in the years prior to school.

**Sample programs and interventions** supported by evidence of effectiveness:

Getting Ready, Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPY), Let's Start: Exploring Together Indigenous Preschool Program

## 4) Family strengthening programs

A broad suite of programs and interventions connected to parent engagement focus on family functioning and strengthening. While these often have a similar aim and purpose as early childhood parenting programs, they can apply across age groups and frequently have a more overt focus on family engagement in learning and connection with school. The common goal of such interventions is to change family behaviours and environments to support healthy child development. As such they are often multi-component and involve multiple parties and agencies related to family functioning and wellbeing, including schools.

Evidence supporting the efficacy of such programs is reasonably robust: thirteen such programs reviewed by Caspe and Lopez (2006) were supported by experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation and reported positive effects on family environments, functioning and social capital. Positive outcomes were also reported on specific parent engagement outcomes. This included an increase in parents' desire and ability to talk with children about school, greater confidence in helping children in academic activities at home, increased hopes and expectations for their children's future, and improved parent involvement with schools.

The multifaceted nature of such programs makes it complex to identify individual components and strands which drive positive outcomes.

**Common elements of the more effective programs** include:

- Delivery / involvement from multiple agencies relevant to the family's life and functioning, including educators and schools, who are trained to work with families;

- Intensive effort (e.g. outreach) is made during the recruitment stage and to retain family involvement in the program;

- 'Like' families are recruited to the program with delivery in a small group format (10-15 parties);

- Distinct components focus on learning and parent engagement in learning;

- Shared activities between all family members provide opportunities for parent-child bonding, but time apart is also incorporated into the program schedule so individuals can engage in complementary activities;

- Opportunities are developed and provided for families to engage in activities outside of scheduled sessions; and

- In some cases, efforts are made to follow-up with families beyond the life of the program, and retain their involvement in future program iterations and delivery (e.g. allowing them to deliver future program elements with other families).

(Caspe & Lopez, 2006; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Mbwana, Terzian, & Moore, 2009; Moran et al., 2004)

**Sample programs and interventions** supported by evidence of effectiveness:

Families and Schools Together (FAST), Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC), Fast Track, High Scope, SAFE Children Head Start,

## 5) Targeted programs for students at risk of drop out

A whole host of programs and interventions exist with the purpose of preventing or alleviating the impacts of risky behaviours or vulnerable situations which may lead to early school leaving. Some of these deliberately and explicitly reach out to and engage parents, thus providing a potential pathway to reconnect with parents and bolster their level of engagement in their child's learning and development over the longer term.

The breadth of such interventions means that is **difficult to assess their effectiveness as a whole**; however, drop-out programs which explicitly target parent connections with school and aim to increase parent conversations with students about learning and broader life goals and aspirations have a few recurrent features, i.e.

- They are usually school-based and / or school-led, whereby families are provided with information and involved in open discussions about potential causes and factors behind drop out; and

- Outreach is undertaken by mentors or other professionals to engage with families, identify and address underlying causes of student behaviour and enhance potential protective factors.

**Sample programs and interventions** supported by evidence of effectiveness:

Families and Schools Together (FAST), Supporting Parents on Kids Education (SPOKES), Parenting Wisely, Positive Action

## 4.2  Possible policy levers

We have seen that the evidence on the benefits of parent engagement on child learning and development is reasonably compelling. Thus there is value to be gained in promoting and supporting all parents to engage in effective and appropriate engagement behaviours across the life of their child's schooling. Many parents are already likely to be doing many of the things which are more conducive to improved learning outcomes for their child. Likewise, many schools are seemingly active and committed to engagement with families and in promoting parent engagement in learning at home.

One of the issues will be to view parent engagement as one set of policy levers within the four pillars of education perspective and to ensure that the levers compliment each other rather than get in each other's way. Another consideration is that families must have a

minimum level of social and economic capital for parent engagement to be both activated and effective (Murray, McFarland-Piazza, & Harrison, 2014; O'Hehir & Savelsberg, 2014)

Family, community, and school efforts, alongside both universal and targeted programs and interventions can all contribute – to varying degrees – in fostering effective parent engagement. Beyond this, there is the question of how governments and policymakers can best tap into what is happening on the ground, supporting and structuring approaches and practices that are shown to (or seem likely to) work to boost engagement, while minimising ineffective, inefficient, and potential negative practices. Essentially, what could governments do to further promote parent engagement?

First and foremost, there needs to be a consistent definition of parent engagement that is easy to understand and operationalise. In addition, the definition of the outcomes affected by parental engagement also have to be operationalised. A companion paper is investigating this issue.

Beyond definitional problems parents and schools need resources to help them become proficient both as individual entities and more importantly as an effective family-school partnership. Families and school staff need tools and development opportunities if they are to build their capacity to engage meaningfully so as to improve children and young people's learning. (Australian Education Union, 2010)AEU 2010

At a structural level schools need to be designed to provide both a challenge to students but also provide adequate support to them. Some of the design is about how spaces for learning are created and utilised and it is also partly about teaching methods and how much the curriculum influences how to be an effective learner rather than what has to be learned.

For early childhood the OECD[4] recommends the following levers:

Policy Lever 1: Setting out quality goals and regulations • Policy Lever 2: Designing and implementing curriculum and standards • Policy Lever 3: Improving qualifications, training and working conditions • Policy Lever 4: Engaging families and communities • Policy Lever 5: Advancing data collection, research and monitoring. Of these five goals Australian education covers the first four. Without the fifth element it will be hard to evaluate progress.

In terms of actual schooling policies it is insightful to note that schools in the UK who have taught parents how to teach their children to read have seen much greater gains in reading age than schools who ask parents to just listen to their children read. http://www.lppa.co.uk/index.php/news-and-information/lppa-newsletters/lppa-newsletter-issue-8/parental-engagement-an-important-lever-for-raising-childrens-acheivement/.

Another potential leaver is identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to allow participation of all parents in their children's schools, with the goal of supporting student learning and helping to close the achievement gap. Government's also

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[4] Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox For Early Childhood Education And Care © OECD 2012.

need to promote specific parent involvement practices that are known to positively influence student learning and achievement.

One lever that tends to be overlooked is ensuring that the roles of education partners – including the ministry, school boards, schools, Parent Involvement Committees, and school councils in furthering parent engagement are identified and articulated which has been done to great effect in Ontario.

**Key policy considerations**

All policies should be built from strong consultation and decision making.

Policies should be written and formal and should be evaluated.

Ontario as an example of good policy:  The purpose of Ontario's Parent Engagement Policy is to provide the supports needed to connect parents at the local level and to help ensure that they have the skills, knowledge, and tools they need to engage fully in their children's education and in the life of their schools

In Ontario's education system, all partners acknowledge the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement. Students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations.

> **In Ontario, parents:**
>
> - are welcomed, respected, and valued by the school community as partners in their children's learning and development;
>
> - have opportunities to be involved, and also a full range of choices about how to be involved, in the educational community to support student success;
>
> - are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school;
>
> - • are supported with the information and tools necessary to participate in school life.

An effective parent engagement policy must acknowledge the importance of parent voice by providing multiple ways for parents to express their perspectives on education and to receive responses from other educational partners. We must recognize the tireless efforts of parents who share their time, energy, dedication, and commitment to support student learning. Likewise, we must recognize that strong and effective parent engagement begins with parents supporting parents at the local and regional levels.

**Ontario follows the following strategic directions:**

**Strategy 1: School Climate**

Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued, and heard.

**Strategy 2: Eliminating Barriers**

Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement thatmay prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning and to reflect the diversity of our students and communities.

**Strategy 3: Supports for Parents**

Provide parents with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school.

**Strategy 4: Parent Outreach**

Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools, and resources, to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement in schools.

The strategies do not work on their own. The Government has to support them.

**Ontario Education Ministry Actions**

- Actively support and foster parent engagement through the Parent Engagement Office in the Inclusive Education Branch.

- Consider parent perspectives and seek input from parents on policies and programs that affect them and their children's learning.

- Support the parent associations.

- Value the contributions and perspectives of parent organizations and groups as well as individual parents.

- Seek to identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning.

- Expand communication and outreach to share information and strategies that will increase parent engagement in their children's education at home and at school.

- Provide funding and tools (e.g., guides) for the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grants program.

- Incorporate the principles of equity and inclusive education into the PRO grants and refocus PRO funding to better help parents in high-needs areas participate in their children's education.

- Improve timelines for flowing PRO funding to school councils and regional organizations to enable projects to begin earlier in the school year.

- Review the PRO grants program and evaluate its effectiveness.

- Conduct and disseminate research on promising practices that foster parent engagement and that demonstrate the link between such engagement and improved student achievement and well-being.

- Expand the number of Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in high-needs communities.

- Engage parents and families in their children's education and in the education system through the ministry's Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program.

- Provide funding through Grants for Students' Needs for school boards to support a wide range of parent engagement activities.

- Host annual meetings with PIC chairs to provide a forum for open dialogue on their challenges and opportunities to enhance parent engagement in our schools and to improve student achievement and well-being.

The key to success is parent engagement policy that (1) is driven by Government in an holistic manner, (2) is inclusive and covers research, programs and evaluations from a needs-based perspective and (3) has a vision that involves national regional and local perspectives which involves parents as equal partners.

# 5 Conclusion

It is clear that parent engagement is not a "one size fits all" policy and that the relationships that underpin the engagement activities are the most important consideration from a policy perspective despite the allure of activity based interventions.

From a strategic perspective, parent engagement needs a strong policy framework to set the boundaries around what parent engagement is, is not, and the roles and responsibilities for each of the major players. A strong focus is also needed on identifying the resources and professional development requirements that will foster the embedding of parent engagement into educational policy and practice.

How parents are viewed, the strategies that are followed and the level of government support are the starting point for a process of continuous improvement that targets the family-school partnership and increasingly includes students as participants as they mature.

While it is valuable to focus on the inputs to parent engagement more needs to be done in respect of the processes of parent engagement and the desired outcomes. School leadership and professional development of school staff are important processes that can

accommodate parent engagement practices. Academic achievement is only one aspect of the outcomes of parent engagement and frequently is restricted to numeracy and literacy progress as evidenced in the NAPLAN results. Not only should a greater focus should be placed on what constitutes effective learning so that all children benefit from the educational experience regardless at the point where they decide to leave school.

Parent engagement is important for a child's social and emotional wellbeing, not just learning outcomes. The recently released Australian Child Wellbeing Report identified four key areas of concern. Firstly, the years 8-14 are important. Policy needs to pay attention to more than academic achievement. Secondly, marginalisation is associated with low wellbeing. The study found that young people who are marginalised report worse health and do not engage in school to the same extent as young people who are not marginalised. This has long term consequences for the human capital development of marginalised young people. Thirdly, young people are experts in their lives. As such they should be the key informants on policies affecting them. Fourthly, any policy implemented to improve the wellbeing of young people in their middle years must be accompanied by rigorous monitoring and evaluation of progress. While there is evidence in terms of academic achievement outcomes, monitoring of other forms of progress needs strengthening.

The embedding of parent engagement into the educational landscape has much to offer in addressing the concerns not just for children 8-14 but all children and adolescents. However, for parent engagement to realise its full potential, the policy levers need to be working in harmony with the policy levers for education performance, physical wellbeing, social and emotional wellbeing and young people participating in issues affecting them.

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# Appendix 1: Overview of parent engagement programs

**Overview of key features and outcomes of programs related to parent engagement in children's learning**

| Program | | Content and delivery approach | Target audience(s) | Outcomes: child | Outcomes: parent behaviour | Type of change | Study design |
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| Project SAFE | | Project Safe is composed of two separate components: the I Can Problem Solve and the Strengthening Families programs. The Strengthening Families program is a short term (7-14 sessions) intervention which consists of weekly sessions in parent skills training, child skills training, and family life skills training. The I Can Problem Solve program uses a variety of interactive tools like games, stories, puppets, and role playing to supply children with problem-solving and critical thinking skills. The program is taught in a series of 83 twenty-minute sessions which occur over the course of a school year. | First grade school students and their families | Improved school bonding, social competence and self-regulation | Improved parenting skills and family relationships | Behaviour | Experimental evaluation using randomised selected of first grade classrooms |
| Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) | | A large-scale program providing inner-city children and their families the opportunity to participate in extended intervention from preschool to Grade 3. Centers are located in or in close proximity to elementary schools. The program at each center is coordinated by a Head teacher, the Parent Resource Teacher and a School-Community representative. Parent Resource Teachers implement a comprehensive parent involvement component in a centre-located parent resource room. Activities include parent education and training, social support, activities for parents, classroom volunteering, assisting classroom teachers in reading groups and attending field trips. School-Community representatives conduct outreach and home visits to families. | Preschool and early primary aged children and their families (urban disadvantaged neighbourhoods) | Long term outcomes include: higher school completion; attendance; higher reading and maths scores; lower depressive symptoms; lower delinquency and incarceration | None clearly reported - the evaluations examined longitudinal impact on children. Parent involvement was related to child outcomes, but parent behaviour change outcomes are implied but not reported. | Behaviour | Longitudinal RCT with long term follow up, but child outcomes only. |

| Families and Schools Together (FAST) | | Whole family intervention designed to improve behavioural and academic outcomes for at-risk children. Program commences with an outreach phase of home visits, inviting families and children to participate. Multi-family engagement sessions are then held at school or in a community venue on a weekly basis for 8 weeks. The sessions involve family time together, structured activities with others, and separate child play and family discussions.<br><br>Participants are encouraged to stay connected to the program through FASTWORKS, involving monthly reunions of FAST graduates. FAST is run by a community collaborative team, with an essential core of four partners from the school, a community based agency, a drug and alcohol agency, a parent (usually a FAST graduate) plus other community agencies. | Primary aged children and their families; (Note: model has been extended to other age groups) | Improved academic competence; Improved social skills; Reduced reports of behavioural problems, aggression and anxiety | Most parents report feeling more able to support child's education; increased social networks and reduced feelings of isolation; increased engagement with school and community activities (2 years later); improved family functioning and adaptability. | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Behaviour | Multiple RCTs conducted showing impacts and some sustained effects. Pre/post measures collected as part of program. At least one evaluation of program in Australia reports successful child and family outcomes. |
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| The Incredible Years | | The Incredible Years (IY) Series is a set of programs for parents, teachers and children. There are four basic parenting programs that target key developmental stages: 0-8 months; 1-3 years; 3-6 years; 6-12 years.<br><br>The parent programs focus on parent interpersonal problems such as depression and anger management, Attentive Parenting Prevention Program, and the School Readiness Program. There are two child programs: a small group child treatment (ages 4-8 years) and a classroom prevention program (ages 3-8 years). One Teacher Classroom Management Program for teachers of children ages 3-8 years. Delivered in schools, health centres, hospitals, foster parent agencies | Parents of children 0-12 years | Reductions in child externalising and internalising problems at school and at home with mothers and fathers. Increases in children's emotional literacy, social skills, problem solving, compliance and school readiness | Reductions in parent depression and stress; increases in positive family communication and problem solving, nurturing parenting interactions, and replacing harsh discipline with proactive methods; increases in school involvement | Behaviour | Multiple RCTs indicating efficacy of program. Long term (up to 10 years) effects largely maintained. |
| Fast Track | | The program is designed to prevent antisocial behaviours through promoting child competencies, improved school context, parent-school relationships, and parenting skills.<br><br>Parent groups, social skills training groups, and academic tutoring were implemented for parents at high risk of conduct disorder and convened once a week.<br><br>During the first hour of the program, parents met to discuss parenting strategies, and children met in social skills training groups. Following this, parent–child pairs spent 30 minutes together in cooperative activities. In the last 30 minutes, | 5 - 16 year olds at risk of conduct disorder | Modest positive impacts on several social, academic and behavioural outcomes | Less harsh parenting; increased involvement in learning at home and school | Behaviour | Several RCT evaluations have been completed over the course of the program, with long-term follow up |

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| | | children worked with an academic tutor, while parents observed. | | | | |
| Positive Action | | School-based program focused on social and character development, supporting skills, and the attitudes of children and adolescents. The program consists of a classroom curriculum, a principal's kit, a counsellor's kit, a family kit that contains prepared home lessons paralleling the school program, along with parent-involvement activities; and a community involvement program. The total time students are exposed to the program during the academic year is approximately 35 hours, while family kits are implemented weekly over the whole school year. | Children from kindergarten to Grade 12 | Increases in maths and reading scores; reduction in aggressive behaviour and delinquency; reduced substance use; improved life satisfaction and decreased mental health issues | Higher parent, teacher and child ratings of involvement in school decisions and level of involvement in homework | Behaviour | Several RCT evaluations with at least one year follow up |
| Getting Ready intervention | | Parent engagement intervention designed to facilitate school readiness among disadvantaged preschool children, with a particular focus on language and literacy development.<br><br>The intervention has two components: (i) triadic collaborative planning, which uses strategies aimed to mutually support parent-child and family-school relationships (e.g., home visit sessions where teachers and parents brainstorm collaboratively around problems or issues related to children's social, motor, cognitive, or communicative development and learning); and (ii) joint behavioural consultation, which involves trained consultants assisting teachers and parents to engage in structured problem solving and intervention planning for all students in program. | Preschool (at risk) children and their parents | Teacher reports v control better language, reading and writing skills | Higher quality interactions with child; Use of appropriate directives with child; more likely to demonstrate appropriate supports for child's learning | Behaviour | At least two RCTs have been conducted using observational, test result and self-report data. |

| High Scope Perry Preschool | | As originally evaluated, High Scope entailed a 2.5 hour classroom session for children each weekday morning and a weekly 1.5 hour home visit to each mother and child on one weekday afternoon each week. The program encouraged active learning among children by allowing them to initiate activities and control their environment.<br><br>Teachers received curriculum training and supervision and worked with small groups of five or six students. Home visits by teachers were made to discuss and practice activities for parents to carry out with their children. | 3-4 year olds and their families (low SES / CALD) | Numerous and sustained outcomes over time include: higher academic grades, earnings, fewer arrests, less welfare receipt | Better attitudes towards children's schooling at 15 years; Increased aspirations of children to attend college | Beliefs and attitudes | Longitudinal RCTs with long term follow up on multiple life outcomes. |
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| Reach Out and Read (ROR) | | Early literacy program within paediatric primary care environments which comprises of three core elements. 1) At child check ups, clinicians encourage parents to read aloud to their children and give them age-appropriate tips and encouragement for doing so. Those who have difficulty reading themselves are encouraged to invent their own stories and spend time naming objects. 2) Providers give every child between six months and five years a book appropriate to the child's age. 3) The waiting room environments are literacy rich and often have volunteer readers | Infants and pre-school children and their families | Improved language scores; Improved literacy | Increased frequency of reading to child; Increased enjoyment in reading; Increase in own reading; Greater number of books in the home | Behaviour | Several evaluations have been undertaken, examining pre and post outcomes and comparisons with parents / children not in the program (includes RCT) |
| Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) | | An interactive homework process in which students are required to share their work and express their ideas about something they are learning with someone at home.<br><br>Parents are invited to pose questions and comments and give teachers feedback on the homework assignments. Assignments can be scheduled at regular intervals during a school year. | All students and parents (universal) | More homework completion; Better grades on homework | Higher levels of involvement in homework reported by students and parents during intervention; Parents in intervention more likely to have had bi-directional communication with teacher than parents in control group; With inclusion of a training component + TIPS, parents felt better able to help children and the program helped their understanding of how their involvement could impact learning | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | At least two quasi-experimental studies using a treatment and control group. Other studies have examined test scores and responses from those involved in intervention. |

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| Supporting Parents on Kids Education (SPOKES) | | SPOKES aims to address low levels of literacy and high levels of problem behaviour that may co-occur with children as they begin school. The intervention consists of a group parenting program (The Incredible Years), combined with a program training parents to support their children's reading at home, and change four risk factors: ineffective parenting, conduct problems, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms, and low reading ability.<br><br>Program consists of a weekly 2.5 hour session for parents over 28 weeks based in school. At each session a library of books and literacy activities is provided, with parents encouraged to borrow books and games for use at home. | Children in first year of school and their parents | Reduced antisocial behaviour at home; Increased reading age | Increase in reported use of engagement strategies with child: play, rewards, praise and time out. Reduced harsh parenting practices. (Possibly) positive impacts on parents reading strategies | Behaviour | One RCT study from UK with good sample sizes and results at one year follow up |
| Parents as Teachers (PAT) | | Home visiting by trained parent educators (typically monthly), providing parents with age-appropriate developmental information, parent-child interaction activities, and address any concerns. The program also provides access to parent groups meetings on a regular basis and referrals to services as needed.<br><br>The aim of the program is to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development, improve parenting practices, prevent child abuse and neglect, increase children's school readiness, and detect developmental delays and health issues. | Parents of children up to age of 5 years | Generally small improvements in child development and readiness for school | Increased knowledge of child development and ways to stimulate child; Increased engagement in reading and storytelling activities particularly for low income and teen parents; One school-based intervention including PAT resulted in increase in reported parent confidence in working with the school and others and understanding their own educational growth. | Knowledge<br><br>Self-efficacy | Multiple RCTS conducted through some showing small / mixed effects on participants. Post-intervention surveys in school-based delivery. |
| Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) | | Program designed to help parents provide opportunities, recognition, interaction and a role model to their children. There are five components: home visits by pre-school teachers, provision of resources (especially books), group activities, special events (e.g. library visits) and postal communication between teachers and children.<br><br>Teachers were funded for a half day per week to work on the program. Family involvement was of low intensity (monthly contact) and long duration (18 months). | Families of children aged 3-5 years | Improvements in early literacy but largely dissipated by age 7; Children more likely to talk about reading and writing and have interest in books | Treatment parents increased reading activities with child even when teacher not present; more likely to ask child to tell stories; higher number of books in the home | Behaviour | One study used pre/post interviews with parents and a random control group. Another study qualitative pre and post reporting. |

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| Storytelling for the Home Enrichment of Language & Literacy (SHELLS) | | Early literacy intervention designed to empower the families of young children between birth and three years of age in their role as their children's first literacy teachers. SHELLS offers intensive support to parents/carers, with contacts of various types (group meetings, telephone calls, home visits, email, newsletters) offered to participants each week for 40 weeks per year for up to three years.<br><br>The program is based on everyday activities and experiences such as talking with children, reading to them, singing with them, encouraging them to draw and scribble, and involving them in functional, social experiences that involve literacy. Facilitators are recruited from the local population, and the program has been implemented within Indigenous communities in regional and rural locations, as well as migrant families. | Parents of children aged 0 - 3 years; Indigenous | pre/post: increased vocabulary and use of words in narratives | Pre/post qualitative interviews indicated: intervention helped parents reinforce home literacy practices and this was sustained; fostered involvement of other family members in literacy activities with child; engagement in more reading and literacy activities. An RCT amongst migrants indicated intervention led to greater use of language elicitation strategies and improved quality of home language and literacy environment. | Behaviour | One small RCT, supported by pre/post qualitative interviews. |
| Even Start Family Literacy Program | | Family-focused intervention program designed to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and low literacy. The program includes three 'core' services: early childhood education, adult literacy training and parenting education. The adult education component includes services that develop parents' basic educational and literacy skills, while the parenting education is designed to enhance parent understanding of child development, child behaviour management training, increasing parents' capacity to support their children's education, and life skills.<br><br>Each Even Start program is expected to provide at least 60 hours of adult education, 20 hours of parenting education and 65 hours of early childhood education per month. | Parents and their children 0-8 years from low income families | Decrease in behavioural problems for some children; limited impact on school readiness compared with control group | Intervention parents more likely to have more reading materials in the home than control; staff assessments indicate most parents demonstrate sustained school involvement and engaged in shared reading activities. | Behaviour | Mixture of evaluation data: experimental and RCT evaluations have been performed, as well as assessment / performance recording by staff, teachers, parents. |
| Home instruction program for pre-school youngsters (HIPPY) | | Home-visiting program designed to teach parents how to enhance preschool-age children's school readiness. Home tutors are recruited from local communities to work with parents over 2 years during children's transition to full-time school. Visits are usually made every two weeks and regular group meetings of parents are organised. The program has been rolled out in 50 locations in Australia. | Children 4-5 years and their families (focused in disadvantaged areas / at risk of developmental delay) | Increased performance in pre-numeracy and pre-literacy; Increase school readiness for some cohorts; enjoyment being read to; stronger peer relations | More contact with school and involvement in child's learning and development; More likely to have engaged with child in home and out of home activities (stories, museum visits, sports etc); Feeling more supported by other | Behaviour | Mostly experimental evaluations using a control group, including a quasi-experimental evaluation with a comparison sample (LSAC) in Australia. |

| Program | | Description | Target | | | | |
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| | | | | family and friends (social network); greater rate of transition into employment. From pre to post, increase in confidence in role as child's first teacher. | | | |
| Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) | | The aim of the program is to improve family life by changing parent child-rearing attitudes and practices, and by changing children's behaviour, primarily through altering communication styles. The program involves a series of eight 3 hour group sessions on a weekly basis. Sessions focus on modifying parenting behaviours / changing communication styles.<br><br>There are no stated restrictions on who can deliver the program, although those who are parents themselves are preferred. | Parents (children of all ages) | Improved self-esteem | Large effect on parent's knowledge; Showed greater understanding of children, increased their democratic ideals, showed increased positive regard, empathy, congruence, and respect for their children. | Beliefs and values<br><br>Knowledge | Meta-analysis of 23 studies of PET |
| Achievement for All program | | An approach conceptualised as a means to support schools and local education authorities to provide better opportunities for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to fulfil their potential.<br><br>The approach, which was implemented in 454 schools in ten local authorities involved three main components: i) assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils and their progress; ii) structured conversations with parents emphasising the building of parent engagement and confidence; and iii) provision for schools to develop wider outcomes. | Children with special educational needs / disability and their families | Greater rate of improvement in English and Maths than comparable students not in program; Greater positive relationship with school than comparison students; improved attendance | Increased completion of structured conversations with school as program progressed; Improved parent relationships with schools; Some suggestions of increased confidence | Behaviour | Mixed methods evaluation. Quantitative teacher and parent surveys conducted at commencement, 12, and 18 months post-implementation. Intervention and comparison schools were included for student results. Qualitative consultation and case studies were also conducted. |

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| Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL) | | A summer learning program that primarily focuses on summer learning loss among CALD children from low-income backgrounds. Supplementary aims include academic self-concept, parent involvement, and social behaviour.<br><br>Instruction is provided by teachers and teaching assistants to groups of 15 students, ranging from grades 1 though 7. Each class is held for eight hours per day and five days per week, for a six-week period. Parents are encouraged to read with their children, maintain reading logs, and attend program events. Additionally, each week students attend a speaker series with distinguished community persons and engage in culturally-rich activities in the community. | Primary school students living in low-income urban communities (CALD) | Higher reading scores; More time spent in academic activities; Read more books | More likely to have encouraged child to read; to have read to their child; to have taken a computer class | Behaviour | Experimental evaluation with control and treatment group. Data collected from program statistics, parent and child surveys and child testing. |
| Communications interventions to promote science and maths (Harackiewicz et al., 2012) | | Trial of a three part intervention to help parents convey importance of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) to their children and whether this would lead them to take more of these courses in high school. The intervention consisted of two brochures mailed to parents and a Web site, all highlighting the usefulness of STEM courses. | Parents of high school children | Increase in take up of STEM courses by intervention students | Intervention promoted mother's perceived value of STEM course and led to a higher number of conversations between parent and child on course choices, educational plans and mathematics and science | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Behaviour | Random control group included. Administrative data (for courses / modules) and self-report data. |
| Dialogic Reading Intervention | | Eight week intervention using dialogic shared reading practices between an adult and child (parents / staff). The intervention involved two instructional sessions for adults. Children engaged in one-on-one interaction with an adult at least four times a week.<br><br>The intervention was formed for an evaluation of the impact of dialogic book reading instruction on adults and children, and to examine any differences between parent-child and staff-child (v control) groups. | Preschool children with mild to moderate language delay | Increased use of language and expressive language | Both parents and staff changed their shared book reading style over the course of the intervention | Behaviour | Small RCT conducted with pre and post intervention assessment: testing data and videotaped interactions |

| Program | | Description | Target Group | Child Outcomes | Parent Outcomes | Outcome Type | Evaluation |
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| Let's Start: Exploring Together Indigenous Preschool Program | | A 10-week multi-group (i.e., parent and child group, parent only group and child only group) early intervention program targeted towards Indigenous children aged 3–7 years and their parents.<br><br>The program aims to help close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage by improving the quality of parenting and early social-emotional learning of Indigenous children and assisting them in the transition to school. Trained group leaders facilitate the program. Children in the program are referred from preschools and schools, health centres and by family members. The program is run over a single school term in a safe place such as a school or a childcare centre. | Indigenous parents and children 3-7 years | Improvements in child's behaviour; Decrease in anxiety and attention problems | Improved social skills; Improved parent-child interactions; Increased self-efficacy as a parent | Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Two evaluations conducted, one using a comparison (non random) control group, another looking at post-intervention outcomes. Follow up was conducted at 6 and 12 months with results sustained |
| ParentCorps | | ParentCorps helps parents promote their children's social, emotional, and self-regulatory skill development and partner with early childhood educators to advance their children's behavioural and academic functioning, mental health, and physical development.<br><br>The program is implemented through a weekly series of fourteen 2 hour group sessions, which occur concurrently for parents and children. Groups include approximately 15 participants and are held in early childhood education or child care settings. | Children 3-6 years and their parents in low-income communities | Higher reading and writing scores than comparison group at 12 month follow up; Improved behavioural outcomes | More involved with child's school and teacher than comparison group, sustained after 12 months; Better parenting scores than comparison group, sustained after 12 months | Behaviour | At least three studies, all with good sample sizes and randomly assigned schools to treatment / intervention through a matched pairs design. Follow up undertaken at 12 months. |
| Parenting Wisely | | A self-administered computer based program that teaches parents and their children about the risks of substance abuse.<br><br>Over three sessions, youth meet with a substance-abuse prevention specialist, while parents view the CD-ROM. Families then share a meal together. During the last 30 minutes, families talk about a CD-ROM scenario with workbooks. | 9-18 year olds at risk of juvenile delinquency and their parents | Reduction in child behavioural problems | Increase in parenting skills and self-efficacy; improved ability to talk with children about how they are doing at school; improved relationships with children | Self-efficacy<br><br>Knowledge<br><br>Behaviour | Multiple RCTs conducted, though data is sourced predominantly through self-report. |

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| READY4K! | | Texting service aiming to break down the complexity of parenting into small steps that are easy-to-achieve and providing continuous support for an entire school year.<br><br>Three texts to parents of preschool children were sent every week to support their engagement in their child's literacy development: i) a 'FACT' text designed to generate buy in from parents; ii) a 'TIP' text that aimed to enhance parents' self-efficacy; and iii) a 'GROWTH' text, which provided parents with encouragement and reinforcement as well as a follow-up tip. The service lasted for eight months. | Parents of preschool children | Gains in some areas of early literacy | Increased engagement in home literacy activities; increased parent involvement at school | Behaviour | A good sized RCT was conducted drawing on data from parent and teacher surveys (pre/post) and student academic scores |
| School-Family Partnership Programme (Acre, Israel) | | Project aiming to help parents support their children in school and to help teachers appreciate the families' culture, language and educational aspirations.<br><br>The program involved parents and teachers participating in bi-weekly activities within schools, and between schools in the area. Activities included workshops for parents and their children, group guidance for parents, sessions of shared learning, open days for parents, parent-child reading and writing, regular and constant communication with parents, exchanging of information, feedback and evaluation forms, home visits, parent volunteering and community-wide celebrations related to literacy and culture. | Universal - all families and children and wider community | Improved academic achievement in reading and writing | Greater engagement in reading with child; Positive increase in family literacy involvement/helping with homework; Increase in teachers perceiving parents as partners in children's learning and development | Behaviour | Experimental evaluation using parents and teachers from control and treatment schools. Pre/post questionnaire and child test data used. |
| Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) | | Program focuses on low-income, culturally-diverse parents of children at all school levels. It is delivered over 9 weeks with content partly tailored to what parents want to cover - including home–school collaboration, understanding the school system, creating a home learning environment, and college preparation. Upon completion, parents graduate and can enrol in a follow-up program. | Low income, CALD parents of children all school years | Less likely than non program students to encounter discipline and attendance problems | Large increase post-intervention for parent knowledge of school system and child's learning activities; moderate increase for parent efficacy to support child in learning; small to moderate increases in parent role construction, college aspirations for child, home learning and parenting activities; More likely to help child with homework; More likely to initiate contact with school. | Knowledge<br><br>Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Pre-post evaluations only, but reasonable sample size and number of studies (3) |

| Program | | Description | Target | Child outcomes | Parent outcomes | Outcome type | Evaluation |
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| Project ACHIEVE | | Whole-school improvement program with seven components including parent training. The parent component includes conducting a needs assessment of home–school collaboration, outreach to parents, training parents to work at home with children, teaching about school programs, a 'parents in the classroom' component, and parent centres. | 3 - 14 year olds (universal) | Improved discipline / behaviour; improvements in reading and maths | Pre / post: increased knowledge of course content; increased control of children; improved relationship with children | Knowledge<br><br>Behaviour | Quasi-experimental studies, longitudinal for student outcomes. Parent outcomes measured are of weaker standard: pre/post self report |
| SAFE Children | | Family-based preventive intervention for children entering the first grade seeking to address and negate risk factors in low-income inner city neighbourhoods.<br><br>The program consists of two components – i) multiple-family group sessions and ii) a reading tutoring program. The group sessions focus on parenting skills, family relationships, managing family challenges, engaging parents in their child's education, and managing neighbourhood problems.<br><br>The sessions are also designed to give parents a peer support network with other parents. The family component operates for 20 weeks from a community / school base. | 5 - 6 years olds in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (incl CALD) | Increased academic achievement and reading scores; improved child self-regulation skills and social competence. | Mixed outcomes from different evaluations: efficacy trial indicates increased parent involvement in school maintained after two years. More recent evaluation had lower sustained participation in the program and parent attitudes towards education decreased modestly. | Behaviour | Randomised control comparison groups. However, more recent evaluation suggests some negative parent engagement outcomes. |
| Parent University (Washoe) | | Classes offered to parents across a whole school district at both school and community venues. Classes were provided in one of five key areas: supporting learning and navigating the system; leadership and advocacy; parenting; family health and wellness; parents' personal growth and development. Mostly single session classes, but some involved a series of classes. Every class was offered in English and Spanish. | Parents (with focus on 'hard-to-reach') | None reported | Self reported increase in knowledge, skills, confidence and awareness of the topic covered in the class. | Knowledge<br><br>Self-efficacy | Pre-post survey data of participants (n=1018)+ attendance data |
| Family Literacy Program (Basic Skills Agency UK) | | Programs were based mainly in primary schools, jointly staffed by early years and adult literacy teachers, for children and adult literacy education. The programmes ran for 12 weeks, and provided three sessions a week - two with parents and children separately and one joint session.<br><br>The parents worked on their own literacy, as well as learning more about how to help their children's language and literacy development, and preparing an activity to undertake with them in the joint session. A creche was also provided for any | Children 3-6 years and their parents | Gains in reading, writing and vocabulary, sustained at follow up; intervention children rated by teachers as having better behaviour and being more likely to succeed at school | Teacher ratings of intervention child parents indicated they were more likely (than a comparison child parents) to provide support in child's learning and twice as likely to be involved with the school | Behaviour | Pre/post data with follow up at several intervals: 12 weeks, 9 months, and approx 2 years. No comparison apart from teacher ratings of intervention child v matched comparison child. |

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| | | children under 3 years in the family. | | | | |
| Opportunity NYC Family Rewards Program | | An experimental, privately funded, conditional cash transfer (CCT) program to help families break the cycle of poverty. Introduced in six of New York's highest poverty neighbourhoods, the scheme provided cash-assistance to low income families to reduced hardship.<br><br>The cash-assistance was conditioned on participation in pre-specified activities and outcomes in children's education, families' preventive health care, and parents' employment. Specific payments were related to parent discussions with teachers and participation in their own education / training. | Low SES families | Mixed outcomes for different student types (too early to fully assess educational outcomes) | Small increases in interactions with school among parents of elementary and middle school students; More likely to be currently engaged in an education, training or employment-related activity | Behaviour | Large RCT has been conducted, with latest findings three to four years since the initiative commenced. |
| Project EASE (Early Access to Success in Education) | | Intervention designed to increase the frequency and quality of language interactions through book-centered activities and to give parents information about and opportunities for engagement in their children's developing literacy abilities.<br><br>The program was run over five months and each topic began with a 30-minute parent lesson at which literacy activities were modelled, followed by an hour of guided parent-child activities which provided a chance to practice the techniques. For each of the three subsequent weeks, teachers sent home a set of scripted activities centred around a particular book. | Preschool children and their parents | Greater gain in language skills compared to control group | High levels of participation during intervention; high levels of satisfaction with program | Beliefs and attitudes | Evaluation of treatment and control group, with pre and post measures for children's language and literacy skills |
| Bookstart | | UK initiative providing free reading material to families to encourage them to enjoy books together. The Bookstart Baby Bag, which contains two books, is given to babies at their 8-12-month development check by health visitors. The Bookstart Treasure Chest is distributed to three-year-olds through children's centres, nurseries, preschools and other settings for young children. Dual-language packs, packs for deaf and | Infant and preschool children and their families (universal) | None directly identified | Limited impacts: no difference on many measures between control and intervention groups; fathers more engaged in reading with 3-4 year olds; one RCT suggests positive effect on parent | Behaviour | Several research projects have been undertaken: At least two RCTs conducted with baseline and three month follow up with parents. Separate survey of operational staff conducted. Another |

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| | | blind/partially blind children are also available.<br><br>The packs contain guidance material for parents that explains how children benefit from reading, or being read to, at different stages in their lives, and how to choose age-appropriate books. The packs also include invitations to join local libraries and book vouchers that can be redeemed in most stores. | | | attitudes to reading and books. Self-report survey of coordinators shows endorsement for packs and perceived positive impacts on parent-child reading. Self-report parents survey indicates program assisted parents to spend high quality time with children; know more about how to read with child; increased confidence reading with child (especially low SES) | | nationwide survey of parents and carers in the program was also carried out. |
| Better Beginnings | | Program based on Bookstart program in the UK and implemented in Western Australia. The program provides reading packs to parents of infants and young children, and offers a number of resources including: a virtual library on DVDs for children in remote Aboriginal communities; story and rhyme sessions/workshops; outreach story time boxes and discovery backpacks. | Parents of infants and preschool children | None reported | Increased proportion of adults reading with child; increased proportion expressing confidence in sharing books with child; increase number of books in the home | Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Longitudinal research with recipients of intervention - includes pre/post: interview data from parents and case study consultation. No comparison control. |
| Bridging the Gap | | Bridging the Gap aims to enhance the early literacy skills of Indigenous children using a home-shared reading program to promote interactions between children and their families, and bridge the gap between children's literacy experiences at home and the school reading curriculum.<br><br>The intervention involved fortnightly home visits by Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEAs) to participating children and families over 20 weeks. At each visit the family was provided with a book, audio-tape, a game and associated activities and AEAs demonstrated new book-sharing techniques and games that the parents could try with their child. | Indigenous kindergarten children and their families | Mean reading age higher than their mean chronological age; increases in listening comprehension, phonemic awareness and receptive language; positive impact on children's self-esteem, interest in books, experiences with books at home, and home-school links | Adopted more complex reading strategies with child than pre-intervention and compared to contrast group | Behaviour | Small evaluation but involved an intervention and comparison 'contrast' group. Quantitative pre and post testing of children's skills / reading level etc and qualitative interviews with parents. |
| Check and Connect | | A dropout prevention strategy that uses close monitoring of school performance, combined with mentoring, case management and other supports. | Students at risk of dropout | Increased high school completion/ retention; improved attendance; increase in course | Teachers rate parents as being more supportive of their | Beliefs and attitudes | RCTs have been conducted for impact on academic engagement, |

| Program | | Description | Target | Child outcomes | Parent outcomes | Outcome type | Evaluation |
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| | | Enrolled students are assigned a monitor who regularly reviews their performance / attendance, advocates and supports and intervenes if problems are identified. Mentors may engage with families and work to improve school-family relationships. | | credits | children's education | | attendance etc with long term follow-up. Teacher reports on parent engagement. |
| First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative | | A comprehensive program to promote language and literacy development for children and their parents and to promote parenting knowledge and skills. Each Family Literacy Initiative grantee provided services through each of four interrelated family literacy program components: early childhood education; parent-child interactive literacy activities; parenting education; and adult education. | Predominantly low income, CALD parents of children 0-5 years | Significant increase in children's English receptive vocabulary; ability to name letters, colours and numbers; print and comprehension skills; counting objects; problem-solving skills | Significant increases at program exit for parent reading ability; library visits; percentage of parents believing they should read to child in first year of life; use of interactive reading strategies; engaging children in language and literacy activities at home; understanding how the public school system works; involvement in children's schools; consistently following routines with children; setting rules and consequences for children's behaviour | Knowledge<br><br>Behaviour | Mixed methods evaluation. Includes pre/post measures for parent outcomes to examine program impact. Some comparison is made (e.g. with expected child outcomes based on national datasets). Program data and testing data also included. |
| Generacion Diez (G-10) | | Targeted at Mexican immigrant families in the US, the G-10 after school program is staffed by a bilingual program director and two head teachers who lead children in homework help, group activities, and supplemental academic and social-emotional curricula.<br><br>In addition, a parent home education component is implemented to link Latino families, schools, and other support services. Trained home educators acting as liaisons between Latino parents and teachers explain to parents the expectations of the school, communicate children's educational needs, and apprise parents of their children's educational progress. Workshops are held at the school site, and home visits are made once a month or on an as-needed basis. | CALD children and families | Gains in reading, spelling and maths; Higher attendance in program resulted in decreased problem behaviours and increased social competence | Those with children with high participation rates in the program reported: significantly greater increases in the quality of the relationship with their children's school; increased frequency of parent–teacher contact; increased engagement in school activities over a 2-year period. | Behaviour | Pre/post test measures drawn from parent surveys, teacher reporting and attendance data. No comparison sites. |

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| Incentives to attract children and parents into school (Gilmore 1985) | | Strategies were implemented to provide incentives to attract both parents and students (with a history of attendance issues). These included personal contact by telephone, home visits, newsletters, and workshops. The need for parents to be involved in the education of their children was constantly reinforced. | Students with low attendance (and their parents) | Reduced absenteeism | More involved in classroom activities | Behaviour | Evaluation examined school attendance records and pre/post survey of parents. No comparison / control. |
| Program to encourage participation in education (Gross 1974) | | Comprehensive development plan for school staff, parents and the community to encourage participation of all decision-makers in the school process. The program included a range of activities, workshops, parent and community involvement programs and training and services for staff. | Low SES / disadvantaged community | Improved maths and reading test scores | Increased involvement in school | Behaviour | Used test data of students in the school compared to previous year (prior to implementation). Same comparison was used against previous year for parent engagement. |
| Home Access Programme | | A funding program for providing IT access in the home, targeted at parents of children 7-14 years receiving Free School Meals (i.e. Low SES).

The delivery model involved awarding grants to eligible families by means of a single pre-loaded card, which could be used to purchase a computer with one year's connectivity from approved suppliers. | Low income families with children 7-14 years | Increased use of computer for learning; increased confidence in using computer for school-related activities; Increased IT skills | Program estimated to have provided computer access to an additional 2.8% of England's households. Mixed outcomes pre/post: no clear outcomes indicating parents assisted children with learning; More likely to have accessed school website / emailed school; improved expectations for child's learning / achievement. | Beliefs and attitudes

Behaviour | An evaluation was conducted taking a mixed methods approach, including stakeholder interviews, analysis of national and local data sets. A pre/post parents survey with n=800 was completed and, for the pilot evaluation, a random comparison sample was used, though this only used to assess academic outcomes. |
| It Takes Two to Talk | | Program designed specifically for parents of young children who have been identified as having a language delay. In a small, personalised group setting, parents learn practical strategies to help their children learn language naturally throughout their day together.

Six to eight sessions are held with a speech pathologist leading the program. Three individual visits are also made in which interactions are videotaped to identify what is helping the child. | Children 0-5 years with a language delay and their parents | Increased assertiveness and responsiveness; improved ability to interact; increased vocabulary | Improved mother-child interaction; improved family relationships | Behaviour | 3 studies all collected data from treatment group with comparison to a wait list control. |

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| Las for Mej, Pappa ("Read to Me, Daddy) (Sweden) | | Literacy-based project in Sweden targeting working fathers, most of them immigrants, who are part of local trade unions. Local union branches disseminate information about the programme and stock books of interest to both union members and their children.<br><br>Each local union organises 'daddy days', when a working-class author, who presents his book, and a child-development expert discuss the importance of writing and reading, and explain to fathers how they can help to improve their child's reading habits. | Fathers (CALD / Low SES) | none reported | Increase in average number of books read for self; Increase in average number of books read for children; decrease in 'seldom' reading books | Behaviour | Pre/post analysis undertaken from survey data of 236 individuals |
| Mother-Child Education Program (Turkey) | | Program lasting for 25 weeks which was targeted at five-year-olds and their mothers, in order to reach children in the year before starting school.<br><br>The program was delivered via four or five home visits and weekly group meetings lasting three hours for mothers, who then implemented pre-literacy and pre-numeracy activities at home with their children using worksheets, which were intended to be used every day for 30 minutes. Mothers also received information about child development, reproductive health and family planning. | Pre-school / early school age children (at risk) and their mothers | Improved literacy; numeracy; school readiness; academic grades | More interested in child's schooling; Increased attendance in school meetings / teacher conversations; More positive mother-child interaction; improved self-esteem | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Behviour | Experimental evaluation with pre/post control group was undertaken. Follow up conducted at one year post intervention and following the child's completion of first year at school. Including literacy and numeracy testing, and interviews with mothers and teachers |
| Parent Academy (Saint Paul Public Schools) | | Free six-week program aiming to connect parents, schools, and community as equal partners in order to help prepare children for college.<br><br>The program is structured with lesson plans, homework assignments, and attendance requirements for graduation. Implemented at all school levels, often in culturally and/or school-specific groups, with class sizes of 25-30. | All parents (universal) | No direct child outcomes reported | Significant differences pre/post: understanding how to support child with self esteem; ability to navigate school system; discussions with school principal; value placed on extra-curricular activities; reviewing child's progress and preparation for college | Knowledge<br><br>Behaviour | Pre and post surveys with program participants, self report. No control / comparison. |

| Program | | Description | Target | Child outcomes | Parent outcomes | Type | Evaluation |
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| Partnerships in Early Childhood (PIEC) | | A Child and Family Worker is placed in a childcare centre to engage with families and empower them with access to support and resources. This includes a focus on transition moments, access to counselling, parenting skills groups, links with other community support and services. | Preschool children and their parents | Improved social and emotional development; decreased dependency; increased comfort in early education and care settings | Increase in accessing support; increased enjoyment doing things with children; increase in reports of program helping parents learn about child's development, learn skills, find support and services and improve connections with others | Behaviour | A pre/post evaluation was conducted involving quantitative data collection from parents and staff. No comparison or control group was able to be established. |
| Pathways to Prevention | | Comprehensive service offered through a partnership between Mission Australia, seven local primary schools and Griffith University, in several ethnically diverse, socially disadvantaged, and high crime Brisbane suburbs.<br><br>Focuses on interventions that are complementary to interventions in other contexts and has a strong focus on transition points in life (e.g. into school). | Children 3-12 years old and their families | Positive effects on child language development, readiness for school, and behaviour | Small potential increase in parent self-efficacy reported. Other data not located / available at this stage. | Self-efficacy | Evaluation used experimental design and included some comparison (non-intervention) groups (not random). Quantitative measurement was mainly conducted for child outcomes, not parent behaviour change. Parent survey measures examined involvement and efficacy but data mainly used as a variable to analyse child outcomes / program participation. |
| Reading Together (NZ) | | Reading Together comprises 4 workshops over 7 weeks, with each workshop lasting 1 hour and 15 minutes. They are usually held in informal community settings, such as libraries.<br><br>The workshops aim to empower parents to support their children's reading at home, and enhance collaboration between parents, schools and librarians so that reading activities and approaches are joined up. The program has been strongly targeted at whānau (Maori extended families) in NZ. | Students and families (whānau / low literacy) | Greater improvements in reading attainment maintained over time; Increased involvement and interest in reading; Improved confidence | Improved competence and confidence in reading with children at home; Improvements in own reading ability; Increased engagement with school; Increased confidence in interactions with teachers | Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | An RCT was conducted and several other evaluations / feedback from program participants have been completed. Precise methodology is unclear. |

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| School Home Support Practitioners (SHSPs) | | School Home Support Practitioners (SHSPs) were placed in twenty schools in pilot areas of the UK which have higher levels of disadvantage. SHSPs received specialist training and worked to put in place a number of interventions to address parenting skills and children's social development to support and reinforce the specialist numeracy and literacy provision the children are receiving at school. | Students identified with poor attendance / limited parent involvement (in disadvantaged urban locations) | Teacher / parents report improved academic preparedness; increased confidence; emotional self-control; peer relationships in class; attendance | Teachers report increased engagement of parents with school and support of parents in learning; Parents report increased interactions with school and greater involvement in child's learning | Behaviour | Mixed methods: site visits; qualitative and semi-structured interviews with school staff, parents, and students; parent feedback forms; school and testing data. Some data from comparison schools used to ascertain child academic outcomes. |
| Shared reading intervention (Ortiz et al., 2001) | | Parents in the intervention were given a handout which listed the principles that were the focus of the intervention: 1) Follow the child's lead; 2) Get the child actively involved; 3) Make it fun; 4) Use positive feedback; 5) Select stories that will interest the child.<br><br>Additionally, information was given about what to do if a child was not interested in a reading session. These principles were each followed by specific examples of how to implement them. | Pre-school aged children and their parents | Increased interest in reading; More likely to choose books to read | Asked more questions during reading; Provided more positive feedback to child; Sustained practices after intervention (though short follow up - 4 weeks) | Behaviour | One small RCT with pre/post measurement. Data based on parent reading logs completed during the intervention, parent survey, and scale assessing parent's assessment of their child's reading. Videotape coding was also completed of some interactions. |
| Skills for Growing | | Program involving the whole school community (students, teachers, parents) which focuses on the development of key life skills in children and emphasises the development of the whole child, including their academic performance.<br><br>The program is taught in weekly lessons over the whole school year. Families are invited to play a role by being involved in parent meetings, carrying out activities at home with children, participating in meetings on child-rearing issues, and assisting with service-learning projects. There are three 90-minute parent meetings that are basic elements in Skills for Growing. | Children aged 5-11 years and their parents | Improvements in peer relationships; self-concept; conflict management; perception of classroom environment | Teachers report improved interactions and rapport with parents | Behaviour | Quasi-experimental evaluations have been conducted, though focused on student outcomes with no parent involvement in evaluation. Some teacher feedback on impact of program and training components provides a few data items around parent involvement. |

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| Flaxmere Project | | A partnership involving five schools, their communities and the education department with the aim of building relationships between schools, caregivers and community.<br><br>The project consisted of several different initiatives including: Home School Liaison Persons, Computers in Homes, homework support, and other initiatives that were specific to individual schools. | Students and families in disadvantaged areas (universal and targeted) | Improved enjoyment of reading and maths; Improved achievement in reading | Adoption of computer use and skills at home; Increased connectedness with school; More time spent engaged in child's education; Confidence in ability to engage with child's learning; Improvements in own educational development / training. | Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Evaluation over the course of 3 years, involving baseline, duration and end of program measures. Qualitative and quantitative data from schools, parents and students (self-report). Some school and test data analysed as well. Outcomes for parents presented are primarily qualitative. No comparison apart from student test data. |
| Toyota Family Literacy Program (TFLP) | | Broad overarching model and funding for Family Literacy programs. The program model brings students and families together to learn in the children's classrooms. Parents or guardians and their children are asked to identify academic and life goals that can improve their quality of life.<br><br>Educators and community agencies work with parents/guardians and their children to achieve these goals through the four components of family literacy: Children's Education, Parent Time, Adult Education, and Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time. A typical parent participant in the program spends a minimum of 10 hours per week engaged in program elements. | Predominantly CALD / low-income families | Improved reading ability; Improved attitude to and behaviour in school; Increased attendance; Increased homework completion | Increased involvement in child's education; Increased participation in school activities; increase in self-efficacy scores; increase sense of responsibility in child's education; increased own reading ability | Values and attitudes<br><br>Behaviour | An evaluation comprised a series of cases studies, drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from each site. The evaluation also drew on previous outcomes data measured from the program. Data represents some pre/post measures but there is no comparison or control site, apart from some comparison of program students v non-program students |

| | | Flexible program operating from school base with outreach to surrounding areas which is focused on the importance of children's oral language development, being read to at an early age, the development of strong dispositions to learning, and the critical role that parents play in supporting their children.<br><br>The program provides facilitated playgroups for parents and children and opportunities for adult learning courses and support. A learning at home stream is also available for outreach to families who may be isolated or in need of additional support. | Children 0-4 years and their families | More likely to visit libraries and borrow books; be read to; look at books for pleasure | Many pre/post improvements reported including: more positive interactions with child; increase in understanding importance of family involvement in learning activities with child; increased confidence; increased engagement in literacy and numeracy activities; more likely to visit libraries and borrow books; more likely to have a positive connection to the school the program is sited in; have positive perceptions of schools; have higher educational aspirations for child | Knowledge<br><br>Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Mixed methods evaluation using quantitative and qualitative sources. Included surveys (self report) with families at baseline and between 1-2 years after commencement of program. No control or comparison sites. |
| Learning Together Program | | | | | | |
| The Ocean Maths Project | | Originally developed in a deprived area of East London (and since expanded to at least 27 schools), the project sought to address underachievement in mathematics by changing the attitudes and practices of schools, parents and children, specifically through involving parents in their child's mathematics learning process.<br><br>The program takes place in school and involves parents and children engaging in interactive maths-related games and activities. | Parents and children in primary and secondary school | Increased enjoyment in maths; Increased homework completion; Some suggestions of increased maths attainment; Improved relationship with parents | Believe their input to child's learning in maths is important; consider helping child with homework to be important; felt confident helping with maths homework; Changed way relate to maths with child in everyday life; Felt more involved in child's education; Improved level of involvement with the school; Some felt that it improved their own learning. | Values and attitudes<br><br>Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Qualitative and quantitative research with parents, children and teachers. Includes surveys of parents, children and teachers with decent sample sizes. No pre/post as such but parent reports following participation. No comparison control. |

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| Solid Foundation Schools | | Whole school approach to implement a comprehensive range of parent engagement strategies over a two year period: participation in decision-making; research-based school policies for procedures regarding homework and parent-teacher interactions; discussion of role of parents in compacts and policies; alignment of reading home-school links with class; parent education in home reading and study habits; outreach through home visits, family nights and a family resource library. | Parents and students (universal) | Against control schools, students performed significantly higher on standard test scores | None reported, but changes in child impacts attributed to increased cohesiveness between parents and schools | | Experimental evaluation using matched sample of control schools compared with intervention schools. Demonstrate impact on child but no measurement of impact on parent engagement. |
| Parent Support Advisors (UK) | | Creation of a new school support worker role centrally co-ordinated and managed with workers either i) based in a single school or college working on early intervention and preventative support for parents and children , ii) based in a single school or college as in i) with the additional role of working with pupils who have or are likely to be excluded, and iii) based in a local area operating in a cluster of schools, focusing on parenting support classes and one-on-one support. | Parents and students (universal and targeted) | Reported increase in attendance, marginally supported by attendance data | Managers reported increase in parent engagement with child's learning and improved relationships between parent and school; Parents report feeling more confident to deal with emerging school-related difficulties | Self-efficacy

Behaviour | One evaluation has been conducted and though this consulted with a large number and range of stakeholders, most results are based on a line manager survey and a parents survey conducted towards end of pilot. |
| Head Start / Early Head Start father involvement | | Project designed to empower fathers to take a more active role in their child's academic literacy development.

Consisted of six bimonthly meetings (four workshops in Head Start of Early Head Start centre and two community events). Each of the four workshops was designed to introduce fathers to effective literacy strategies they could easily implement in a home environment, and included a shared meal. | Fathers (CALD / Low SES) | None reported | Increased interest and commitment to the ongoing literacy development of child; Increased engagement with child in literacy activities; increased confidence and facility in their roles as agents for change in their children's lives. | Beliefs and attitudes | Qualitative and observational data before, during and after the program |
| Indigenous Parent Factor | | The IPF was developed for use with Indigenous families and educators in remote, rural and urban communities. It comprises of a 3-day workshop aimed at engaging Indigenous parents and carers and helping them with the skills to support early learning in pre-school and the early years of schooling and building confidence to engage with teachers and schools. Includes an accredited 'train-the-trainer' component. | Indigenous parents | None reported | Gained confidence assisting children with learning; gained confidence to talk to teachers about child's learning; | Self-efficacy | Two evaluations have been conducted and participant feedback is collected |

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| New Zealand Home-School Partnerships (Literacy / Numeracy) | | The aim of these programs is for parents and teachers to share strategies for literacy / numeracy practices at both home and school, to support children's involvement and achievement. Lead teachers receive training and support from experienced School Support Services (SSS) literacy / numeracy co-ordinators to implement the program and help lead parents run a series of six sessions for parents and families from their schools. Where appropriate these are conducted in the first language(s) of the groups of parents attending. | All students and families | Belief that programs had minor positive impact on student's engagement, attitudes, confidence and literacy / numeracy achievement | Reported that the programs improved some parents relationship and engagement with school; increased knowledge about literacy / numeracy and confidence to engage in activities with child at home | Self-efficacy<br><br>Knowledge | Mixed methods, using qualitative input from parents, teachers and school principals. Quantitative survey of principal / lead teacher provided perspectives on impact of program |
| Parents as Career Transition Supports (PACTS) | | This program provides parents and caregivers with free advice on educational pathways and on how to communicate with young people about their careers. A free workshop is offered to parents usually through the school. | Parents of high school students | None reported | Reported to build confidence to support children's transition decisions; Helps parents navigate post-school systems | Self-efficacy | Small survey of participants post-program completion |
| Resilient Families Prevention Program | | School-based prevention program designed to develop the knowledge, skills and support networks of students and their parents in order to promote adolescent health and wellbeing. The program consists of five components, including a 'Parenting Adolescents Quiz' evening, policies and processes implemented by the school to enhance support for and communication with parents, and parent education handbooks. | Parents of children aged 11-14 years | Increases in family attachment | Increases in family attachment; Self-reported impact of program elements include talking more to other parents and increasing knowledge and skills as a parent | Knowledge | An RCT has been conducted though final results are not available. Some post program survey data from parents has been collected. |
| Primary Age Learning Study | | An intervention which included the Incredible Years preventative program and a shortened, six week version of the Supporting Parents on Kids Education (SPOKES) literacy programme. Overall, the intervention ran over 18 weeks with parents of eight to ten children invited to attend a group for two-and-half hours in the morning after dropping their children off at school. | Parents of children aged 5-6 years in urban disadvantaged areas | Increased attention on tasks | Improved sensitivity and child-centred discipline; Greater use of calm discipline | Behaviour | RCT study with one year follow up. Findings based in direct observation and parent interview. |
| Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS) | | Project focused on preventing dropout in high-risk middle school and junior high Latino students through involvement with students and their families, the school, and the community. For parents, training was received in relation to school participation, accessing and using community resources, and how to guide and monitor adolescents. | High school students at risk of drop out | Lower dropout rates, sustained over time; Increased attendance; higher academic performance | None reported / located | | One RCT and other quasi-experimental evaluations. |

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| Bending Like a River: the parenting between cultures program | | The program aimed to strengthen the ability of CALD parents to parent confidently and capably in the Australian context by focusing attention on key parenting issues found to be particularly relevant to CALD communities | CALD families (in Australia) | None reported | Fostered understanding of impact of culture on parenting; knowledge of school system | Knowledge | Qualitative research - further details not known |
| Book Checkout Program | | Involves a weekly book checkout activity at elementary school family resource centres. The centres are stocked with a large variety of levelled and chapter books, including books in Spanish for schools with Hispanic families. Parents check out books to read to and with their children. Staff members give parents guidance for reading with their children, reinforcing the children's use of reading strategies, and locating resources for specific family issues. The staff also assist parents in choosing the appropriate level of book for their child, who selects a free book on every visit. | Primary school children and parents | More positive towards reading at school and home; more confident to read out in class; higher reading achievement | More likely to have read to / with children over the course of a week | Behaviour | Quantitative data comparing frequently participating and minimally participation students / families. Testing data, teacher reports and parent self-report used. Non-random assignment, causal connections cannot be made. |
| CANparent trial | | Pilot scheme in UK offering vouchers to parents in three areas to take part in parent training courses. One additional area was included without vouchers being offered but considered a 'light touch' intervention (e.g. Promoting courses, website etc). | Parents of children 0-5 years | None reported | Participation closer to the national profile than other parenting courses; Increase in parent self-efficacy following course and versus a comparison group - greater in courses involving 3 or more sessions; Self-reported improvements in confidence, parenting skills, and relationship with child | Self-efficacy | Still a pilot with interim results. Data includes pre / post self report measures from n=79 parents. There is also a comparison control group. |
| Project Familia | | Intervention for special education students of limited English proficiency, with the participation of parents and siblings. Students received English language enrichment and instruction in content area subjects.<br><br>The project provided social and emotional support and activities for physical development in accordance with the objectives set out in each student's individualised education plan. Participating adults received information on special education services, the needs of special education students, and ways in which to assist their children, | CALD special education students and their families | Some positive academic gains made | Targets for parent attendance and participation with school / teachers were met - however, not clear if this represented a significant change. | | Study used some pre/post measures for test scores, and compared to standardised norms. Parent attendance and participation records were maintained. The study appeared to suffer from some limitations in achieving its goals, with parent |

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| | as well as instruction in English. | | | | | questionnaires unable to be administered and some evaluation questions left unanswered |
| Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (Kentucky) | | An initiative providing multiple training opportunities for parents and community members to develop the capacity to support and advocate for successful public schools for all students.<br><br>The purpose of the training is to: educate parents about how to assess the progress of their children's schools; inform parents how to become involved as partners in improving those schools; motivate parents to help other parents become involved; and support parents after they become involved. | Parents (universal) | None reported | Increased involvement in advocacy and education system; Continued or increased enrolment in further education / training; Increase in knowledge around practices for parent engagement in schools; Strengthening of values towards education and role of parents in this | Beliefs and values<br><br>Knowledge | Survey of participants, some several years after completion - included some measures about participation before, during and after involvement. Self-reported and not necessarily causal, though some measures were rated in relation to impact of program. |
| Academic-Parent Teacher Teams (Creighton Arizona) | | School district which organises Academic Parent–Teacher Teams as an alternative to the traditional parent–teacher conference. Teachers who elect to participate agree to hold 75-minute parent team meetings three times a year and individual parent–teacher meetings once a year. The team meetings consist of the teacher, the entire class of parents, and a parent liaison.<br><br>Each meeting includes a review of student academic performance data, parent–student academic goal setting, teacher demonstration of skills to practice at home, parent practice, and networking opportunities with other parents. | Parents (universal) | None reported | High participation in pilot / demand to continue; Higher participation of fathers; Improved / increased social networks of other parents | Beliefs and attitudes | Short surveys and qualitative / anecdotal evidence |

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| Early Risers | | Multi-year program that aims to reduce aggressive behaviours using a summer program for children, teacher consultation, child social skills groups, and a parent education and skills training program.<br><br>There are two main components: CORE summer program operating four days a week over six weeks; and FLEX, a case management program in which families work with family advocates to decide what actions are necessary for family and child wellness - this is achieved via home visits or over the telephone. | Kindergarten - primary school children with signs of aggressive behaviour / at risk for antisocial behaviour | Some positive impacts on social competence; school adjustment; peer relations; academic competence though not sustained | Decreased parent stress; In testing outreach v community centre based model for delivery, the centre model was a better predictor of participation and program dosage than outreach | | Several experimental evaluations using treatment and control /comparison groups |
| Home School Knowledge Exchange | | The focus of the project was the exchange of knowledge between school and home and home and school, related to literacy and numeracy development. Two activities were designed. The first included videos of classroom lessons, which parents were invited to view. In the second activity, students were supplied with disposable cameras to photograph activities at home which interested them. The project lasted for two years. | Primary school aged children and their families | None reported / located | More involved, particularly with child activities conducted in the home; more likely to come into school | Behaviour | One class of students from eight primary schools were followed over the two year period. Six students were randomly selected from each class and interviews conducted with parents and children and their teachers. Case study / qualitative interviews. |
| Home School Agreements | | Legislative initiative making it compulsory for schools in the UK to complete Home School Agreements. The aim was for Home School Agreements to promote partnerships between schools and parents | All parents (universal) | School staff perceive some improvements in behaviour, attendance, attainment | There were some barriers to take up (antipathy, fear over signing, apathy); some belief amongst schools that the agreements helped develop parent-teacher working, assist parents in supporting children's learning, complete homework, and encourage behaviour | | Sample of schools participated in a survey - responses from school principals / leaders / administrators. Case studies at 10 schools interviewing range of stakeholders including parents and review of documentation (a sample of actual agreements). |

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| HomeWork System | | A research project that used numeracy activities on portable tablet PCs to 'seamlessly' link learning at home and school. The system was intended to work by blurring the boundaries between home and school by making learning materials, individual learning histories and information of aims and objectives available in both the school and home context. | First grade school students and their families | Observed enthusiasm, confidence, responsibility and independence in numeracy | Enhanced understanding of classroom teaching methods and materials; improved sense of connection between work at home and school | Knowledge | Small evaluation using semi-structured interviews with families pre and post intervention |
| It Takes a Village: Multicultural early Learning Program (ITaV) | | Program to engage with migrant and refugee mothers and young children in order to address challenges facing new migrants and empower integration and access of support. Mothers bring children to early-learning play activities to familiarise them with the transition to the Australian school system. The sessions contain a bicultural support worker and mothers are encouraged to participate in life skills workshops. They are also offered help accessing to mainstream services. | CALD / Migrant families and their children (preschool) | Improved social and emotional competence; improved English proficiency; enhanced peer relationships; reported improvements in literacy and numeracy | Increased social capital; Increased ability to access other services and resources; Improved interactions with child and other family members; Increased confidence to access employment and training opportunities | Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | Evaluation comprised qualitative / case study investigation including consultation with parents, staff, and stakeholders to examine impacts of the program. |
| Learning2Go | | Program which provided students their own PDAs on which they could access multimedia learning materials. It was intended that children could use these to share their school-based learning with parents. Children used their PDAs for homework as well as non-school related activities. | All students and parents (universal) | Improved attendance; Higher than projected reading, maths and science results | No clear evidence of impacts on parent engagement: some cases of schools communicating with parents and parents using the technology | | Test and attendance data used to assess impact (with comparison to other results / projected scores). Case study approach from schools involved with some parent consultation |
| Linking Education and Families (LEAF) | | Program aims to assist children with transition into school, as well as raising awareness among parents of the importance of early childhood development. Young children and families are invited to a weekly 'Play Cafe' within a school environment. There are also support networks for parents of other families, opportunities to meet the teacher, welcome packs for parents, and pre-school health checks provided. | Pre-school children (0-4 years) and their families | Perceived readiness for school; peer bonding and friendships | Decreased anxiety and improved confidence relating to child starting school; More comfortable and open with teachers; development of social networks and participation in community | Self-efficacy | Small evaluations, mostly drawing on case studies, observation, parent / co-ordinator interviews and anecdotal feedback. Some quasi-survey measures are presenting on parent's perceived impact / usefulness of program |

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| The Literacy Connection | A model for improving the literacy skills of low-income parents with expected benefits to their preschool and primary-age children. In general, parents are referred by their children's teacher or by other parents who have participated in the program.<br><br>Graduate assistants are employed for 18 hours a week to work with identified parents. In addition, undergraduate early childhood students are hired to provide child care for any preschool children in attendance while their parents are being tutored. The program lasts for 15 weeks, with one-on-one instruction provided to parents for at least one hour per week. | Low income parents with low literacy / English language skills | None reported | More confident engaging in literacy learning; Read more themselves; Developed skills to help with child's homework; more inclined to read with child; High retention rate in program | Self-efficacy<br><br>Knowledge | End of program surveys and feedback form parents on perceived impact |
| Parent-based book-reading intervention for disadvantaged children with language difficulties (Colmar, 2014) | Parents were trained in shared reading strategies and asked to implement strategies in the way they interacted with their children.<br><br>The intervention strategies used during book reading and during everyday conversations included pausing and encouraging the child to talk more on their chosen topic, over a four-month period. | Parents of 4-6 year olds with language delays and difficulties | Improved language development | Qualitative feedback indicated parents enjoyed book reading and maintained the strategies over the course of the program | | Small experimental evaluation with (non-random) control group. Child outcomes measured by pre and post intervention test scores; Parents consulted at end of program through short follow-up interview |
| Parents and Learning | Home-based parent engagement program stemming from the HIPPY intervention which supports parents to participate in their young child's early literacy learning by providing resources and training. PaL kits provide children's picture story books, a related educational activity, an instruction card on how to use the kits, and links to learning. The kits are not ready made but community members work with these to tailor them and ensure they are culturally appropriate. The program operates in four states in Australia, predominantly in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities | 3-5 years olds, their families, and communities (Indigenous) | Improved literacy development | Compared to those not in program, participants are said to be more engaged in children's literacy and community leadership (pilot interim results); qualitative feedback reports increased confidence, parenting skills and knowledge, parent-child interactions, and employment and career outcomes | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Knowledge | Several evaluations of the program at different sites have been conducted. One is a fairly small qualitative study e and data unavailable. A pilot evaluation with interim findings uses a comparison with those not in the program though exact methodology and sample cannot yet be determined |

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| Reading Discovery | | Family literacy program which aims to educate parents about the vital role they play in developing the early literacy skills of their children, and to enhance children's learning readiness for school. There are two delivery methods: i) home visits for one hour each week; and ii) sessions held with parents in a playgroup setting. | Parents of children aged 0-5 years | Increased imaginative play; improved language and social skills | Increased appreciation of role in child's learning; more confident in use of language; read more themselves; increased social connections | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Self-efficacy | Small evaluation using qualitative case study approach, consulting with parents / carers, children and professionals. Pre/post measures are included |
| Parent Teacher Home Visit Project | | Model developed in the US in which teachers and families come together, in a unique setting, as equal partners, to build trust and relationships and consider the child's learning goals and progress. The program trains teachers to make home visits, with participation voluntary and teachers being paid for their time. The aim is to ensure the visits take place on a non-educational / institutionalised setting to aid teachers being seen as equal partners. | Students and their families (Low SES) | Improvement in academic test scores | More positive towards school and teachers; improved relationship with teachers; increased communication with teachers; increased involvement in homework | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Behaviour | Formative evaluation has been conducted across 20 schools with surveys and qualitative consultation of parents, teachers and school leaders, as well as analysis of test data. Evaluation occurred in Year 3 of the project. No control was used, some comparison was made in test data with other local schools. |
| Talk to a Literacy Learner Program (TTALL) | | Program for parents which aims to provide them with understanding of how their children learn reading and writing in the school and how this can be supported at home. The program delivery can vary but generally involves a series of interactive workshops with parents presented by a trained teacher.<br><br>Each session involves input concerning literacy and learning, discussion, demonstration of literacy support strategies, practice of strategies and reflection on session experiences. The program is self contained and includes a supporting DVD and reference material. | Parents of children 1-12 years (low-literacy parents) | None reported | Post-program, some parents report that they are more engaged in various reading and writing strategies; almost all believe they have gained knowledge in the way their children learn; and the large majority have gained confidence in working with children and working as a parent with the school | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Self-efficacy<br><br>Behaviour | One study shows data for parent feedback at completion of program. Another study reports pre/post and comparison findings but does not provide raw data. |

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| Tellin' Stories | | Program aiming to increase the involvement of economically disadvantaged parents in the educational process of their children. The project connects parents, educators, schools and communities, through the development of family-oriented activities (e.g. workshops, writing, training to tell stories in class) based around storytelling, and activities to create positive home-school relationships (e.g. welcoming walkthroughs at schools, engagement of parent readers in class). | Low-income / CALD parents of children in elementary school | None reported | Improved comfort in the school environment; Increased communications among and between parents and school personnel; Increased involvement in school academic activities; Increased literacy activities with children at home | Beliefs and attitudes<br><br>Behaviour | Two evaluations (one preliminary) have been undertaken. These have used qualitative methods and some survey feedback after participation in the program, along with observations of activities. No comparison or control sites are included. |
| Yachad Accelerated Learning Project | | A targeted tutoring system to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in primary and secondary schools who have been identified as at-risk. The program is designed to be implemented by paraprofessionals who have been trained by YALP. Part of the YALP methodology incorporates the identification of learning gaps and the development of individual learning programs for the students. | Students at risk of poor literacy / numeracy outcomes | Mixed results: data suggests some impact for secondary students on literacy and maths scores | No clear parent engagement outcomes: anecdotal evidence only of increased engagement | | Evaluations and studies have been conducted but methodological weaknesses apparent - particularly in terms of parent engagement outcomes / parent feedback. Testing data is used for student outcomes with some comparison to norms / expected levels |
| Home School Community Learning Scheme (Ireland) | | Scheme providing funding for schools designated as having a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Two specific objectives of the scheme are to promote co-operation between school and home, and raise parent awareness of own role in enhancing child's development.<br><br>Part of the funding is allocated to appointment of Home-School Community Liaison Officers - some have responsibility for one school only, others works across 2-3 schools. Officers are typically engaged in home visits, developing and facilitating resources on the school site (e.g. drop in centres, courses) and engaging parents in the school (volunteers etc). | Primary and Secondary students and their parents from disadvantaged backgrounds | Reported improvements in behaviour, attendance, interest in learning | Coordinators and principals report scheme led to greater number of parents engaged and visiting to the school; to a lesser extent, the scheme was also perceived to have increased parent's engagement in learning with child; Improved perceptions of teachers regarding parents and their role in learning. | | Surveys of coordinators, principals. No pre/post but ratings of impact of scheme. |